ΕΝΕΡΓΕΙΑ ΠΛΑΝΗΣ.

Or a brief

DISCOURSE

Concerning

Man's natural proneneſs to, and tenaciouſneſs of Errour.

Whereunto is added

Some Arguments to prove, that that Covenant entred with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. 7. is the Covenant of Grace.

By *J. Whiſton*, Miniſter of the Goſpel.

I have laid the Foundation, and another buildeth thereon; but let every Man take heed how he buildeth thereupon: 1 Cor. 3. 10.

Nemo ſibi tantum errat, ſed alieni Erroris Cauſa, & Autor eſt. Sen. de vit. beat.

Nimis perversè ſeipſum amat qui alios vult errare, ut Error ſuus lateat. Aug.

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THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

THat *there is a Time coming*, viz. *When the* Fulneſs of the Gentiles ſhall be come in, and the Deliverer come out of *Sion*, and hath turned Ungodlineſs from *Jacob*; *when all the Diverſities of Doctrines ſhall ceaſe, and the Doctrine of the Goſpel be taught in its Perfection, Purity and Simplicity; thereupon through the more plentiful pourings forth of the Spirit, a perfect Vnty of Mind, Judgment and Practice, in eſpecial in the Worſhip of God among Saints, and that no ſmall part of the Glory and Happineſs of the Church ſhall conſiſt therein, theſe Scriptures* (*with divers others of a like import*) *do fully declare*, Rev. 22. 1. Zeph. 3. 9. Zech. 14. 9. *Unto which State, when the Church is arrived, ſhe ſhall receive that Approbatory and Commendatory* Eulogium *from Chriſt's own Mouth*, Cant. 6. 8. My Dove, my Undefiled is but One, ſhe is the only One of her Mother, ſhe is the chief

Hic Fluvius eſt uberrima Doctrina Chriſti; *Bright.* in loco.

of her that bear her: *Then the* Daughters ſhall ſee her, and bleſs her; the Queens and Concubines ſhall behold her, and praiſe her: *Then ſhall ſhe be* Ephziba, the King ſhall greatly delight in her Beauty: *Then ſhall ſhe be called* Beulah, *as viſibly appearing in her Marriage-Union with Chriſt. But alas! how far doth the Church at preſent fall ſhort of this Glory and Happineſs? What Diverſity of Doctrines? what Variety of Opinions and Practices ariſing therefrom are there?* Surely for the Diviſions of *Reuben* [of *Zion*], there are, *and cannot but be* great Thoughts *(and thoſe ſorrowful ones too)* of Heart, *in all that are true and legitimate Children.*

Neither in theſe preſent Diverſities of Doctrine, Judgments and Practices found in the Church, (ſome of which muſt neceſſarily be erronious, if not heretical) leſs matter of Sorrow and Grief then her future Unity is matter of Joy and Rejoycing. And therefore let all that wiſh well unto Zion *ſay,* For *Zion*'s ſake will I not hold my Peace; for *Jeruſalem*'s ſake will I not reſt, till the Righteouſneſs thereof go forth as Brightneſs, and the Salvation thereof as a burning Lamp; *that there may be* one Lord, and his Name one throughout all the Earth. *'Tis indeed no wonder that Errours and Hereſies do abound among thoſe who only have the Form, but want the Power of Godlineſs; eſpecially thoſe whom God (as an effect of his Wrath and Diſpleaſure) hath ſent ſtrong Deluſions: and conſequently while there are ſuch in the Churches of Chriſt, and mingled with his Saints, that there are Errors and Hereſies in and among them.* There muſt be Hereſies *(ſaith the Apoſtle, ſpeaking to the Church at* Corinth*)* among you, *that* οἱ δόκιμοι.

Thoſe

Thoſe that are allowed and approved, *viz.* by Chriſt, may be manifeſt, 1 *Cor.* 11. 19. *But that there ſhould be ſuch an abounding of Errors, and theſe ſome of them bordering upon and coming very nigh unto Hereſies, not only among, but in, and tenaciouſly held by thoſe who have the ſame Faith in, and Love to our Lord Chriſt, and for whom he hath made ſuch Proviſion for their Knowledg of, and Guidance into Truth as he hath done, is a like matter of Admiration as of Lamentation; whence this ſhould come to paſs is worthy of our moſt ſerious Inquiry. Some Satisfaction whereunto may be received from the former of the enſuing Diſcourſes; but yet a further Inquiry may ariſe, with an eſpecial reſpect unto thoſe we now ſpeak of (at leaſt ſome of them)* viz. *ſuch, who not only have the old Man crucified, and thereby the Body of Sin deſtroyed, in common with all other Saints, but do walk in a peculiar exactneſs of Obedience to the whole Will of Chriſt, ſo far as known by them: and conſequently who cannot be ſuppoſed to be left of God, nor given up to the Power of Satan, to be ſeduced and influenced by him to the imbracement, or tenacious holding of Errour, eſpecially ſuch who have competent Parts and Abilities, rendring them capable of diſcerning between Truth and Error.*

Now the Enquiry is, Whence it ſhould come to paſs that ſuch as theſe ſhould yet take up and embrace Errors, (yea, and that ſome that are very plain and palpably ſo) and having once taken up and embraced them, ſhould be ſo tenacious of them, as ſometimes they are found to be. Can it be ſuppoſed, that that corrupt Principle or Inclination unto Error connatural unto Men, as fallen, ſhould retain and keep up its vigor and ſtrength, ſo as to have any conſiderable Influence upon ſuch Men's

Embracement of Error? or can they be ſuppoſed to be ſo far under the power of Self-Love, as by that to be rendered ſo tenacious of it, when embraced by them? Can theſe particular Luſts retain their Force and Vigor, when all other Luſts are in a good meaſure mortified and ſubdued?

For Satisfaction hereunto, I ſhall not at preſent inſiſt on the low degree of Mortification, that the Generality of ſincere Chriſtians do attain unto, and conſequently the Strength that inherent Luſt (tho greatly enervated and weakened by renewing Grace) yet retains in them; nor the variety of Biaſſes that good Men may lye under to particular Errours; nor yet the Soveraign Pleaſure of God in concealing particular Truths from ſome of his choiceſt Servants. There are three things that have no little Intereſt in ſuch Men's embracing and tenacious holding of Error. We may call them the deficient Cauſes of thoſe Evils.

1. *Either ſome Error or Miſtake about God, as dwelling in Jeſus Chriſt, or the want of preſerving in their Hearts a continual due ſenſe of what is known of him. The* πρῶτον ψευδος, *the firſt Error, making way for all others, oftentimes reſpects God himſelf: even thoſe who do truly know, and are known of God, yet may and do greatly err and miſtake about him, and in eſpecial as to our preſent purpoſe about his Holineſs and Jealouſy proceeding therefrom, reſpective to his own People; or, ſuppoſe they are right in their Notions, yet they do not preſerve an abiding due ſenſe of what they know of him upon their Hearts. Had but Chriſtians thoſe awakening words of* Joſhua, *Joſh.* 24.19. Ye cannot ſerve the Lord; for he is an holy God: he is a jealous God, he will not forgive your Tranſgreſſions, nor your Sins. *Not only* he will not

not forgive your Tranſgreſſions, *your Rebellions and more groſs Evils, but* he will not forgive your Sins; *your Errors or Miſtakes, and Miſcarriages ariſing from them, tho of an inferiour Nature. I ſay, had but Chriſtians theſe Words always ſounding in their Ears, with a due ſenſe of their Importance upon their Hearts, as* Jerome *had his,* Surge & veni in Judicium; *which added to the former, would make them more efficacious, they would be more wary of imbracing any Error, and more ready to relinquiſh it when detected, than too commonly they are. Chriſtians do not ſtudy and labour to acquaint themſelves with the infinite Holineſs and Jealouſy of God, get and keep a due ſenſe thereof upon their Hearts, as they ought to doe. To ſtudy and weigh Doctrines and Practices, whether only propoſed, or actually embraced, with a right Apprehenſion of the infinite Holineſs and Jealouſy of God in the Mind, and a due ſenſe of the one and the other upon the Heart, would prevent the Embracement of many Errors when propoſed, and produce the Relinquiſhment of others, when actually taken up and embraced.*

And here let me warn all to take heed of judging of the Holineſs and Jealouſy of God, reſpective to his own People, in eſpecial reſpective to themſelves, by ſenſe. 'Tis not ſafe judging of any of the Attributes and Perfections of God by ſenſe, which yet Chriſtians are too apt to do: and hence not ſenſibly feeling or diſcerning of any of the Effects of them, in and upon, or with reference to themſelves, they either entertain Miſtakes about, or elſe have not a due Senſe of what they have the right Notion of, upon their Hearts. Our Hearts are too commonly affected with what we know of God, according as it is verified in ſutable Effects upon, or with reference to our ſelves; when as God

may and often doth manifeſt and verify his Attributes in Effects that are very ſecret and hidden, at leaſt that fall not in, nor correſpond with our Expectations or Suppoſitions; and when they are ſo, they are ſometimes of moſt dreadful Conſequence unto Men. Thus God may exert and verify his holy Jealouſy in ſuffering Men to fall into, and tenaciouſly hold an Error, the Embracement and holding of which is of very dangerous Conſequenee to them, when yet they perceive it not: and therefore let us judg of the Holineſs and Jealouſy of God not by Senſe, but by Faith, according to the Revelations he hath made thereof in his Word: and anſwerably ſearch the Scriptures, weigh all Doctrines and Practices, whether only propoſed, or actually embraced, with a due Sence, holy Awe and Dread of the Holineſs and Jealouſy of God upon our Hearts.

2. *The low Enjoyment that Chriſtians generally have of the Communion of the Spirit. 'Tis one of the glorious Priviledges that our Lord Chriſt hath purchaſed, and ſtill intercedes for, on the behalf of his People; and 'tis prayed for by the Apoſtle primarily on the behalf of the* Corinthians, *and ſecundarily of all Saints;* 2 Cor. 13. 14. *yet it is not attained unto and enjoyed, but in a lower degree, by moſt of thoſe in whoſe Hearts he habitually dwells, wherehy the Life of Grace is maintained in them. Chriſtians through their Carnality and Senſuality, want of acting their Faith on Jeſus Chriſt for the Spirit, and holy Dependance on him for this Communion, or through one Miſcarriage or another, greatly deprive themſelves of this Priviledg. And pardon me, tho I ſay (not to exempt any) it is well if thoſe who unadviſedly decry the Jewiſh Church as a Carnal Church, are not themſelves found not much exceeding them in Spirituality, at leaſt ſo many of them*

in

in moſt Ages, as might juſtly give to the whole the Denomination of a Spiritual Church. Alas! we are all too carnal. This is certain, the more Spiritual any are, the more of this Communion of the Spirit they have; and the more of this Communion they have, the greater is their Security from Error, and anſwerably ordinarily the more free they are from it. One of the great Ends of our Lord Chriſt in purchaſing and leaving the Spirit with his Church, was its Guidance into, and Eſtabliſhment in all Truth. Had we but the Communion of the Spirit in that Fulneſs attainable even in this Life, no ſooner ſhould we turn to the Right hand or to the Left, but we ſhould (as the Prophet ſpeaks) hear a Word *(and that made effectual)* behind us, ſaying, This is the Way, walk in it. *He would not only effectually reſtrain thoſe corrupt Principles within, inclining us to Error, and cauſing our tenacious holding thereof, and actuate that Principle of Love to Truth, and Self-Denial wrought in Regeneration, but would enlighten our Minds in, and ſubdue our Hearts unto an Embracement of Truth, and conſequently to a ready Relinquiſhment of Error, how contrary unto ſelf ſoever the one and the other may be.*

3. *Chriſtians ignorance of, and unacquaintedneſs with themſelves, in eſpecial as to their Proclivity unto Error, and exceſs of Self-Love, with the various Influences it hath upon their Minds, may be aſſigned as another Cauſe concurring to the Evils before mentioned,* Error ex eo eſt homini quod ſibi eſt incognitus. *They ſee not, nor are ſenſible of theſe Evils in themſelves, and hence neither apply themſelves to that vigorous Mortification of them, nor ſo diligently watch againſt their Production of the evil Effects under conſideration as they ought to do. And this may be added,*

that

that many, if not moſt Chriſtians, ſeem leſs apprehenſive of their danger, in reſpect of theſe Evils, than of moſt others that original Concupiſcence manifeſts it ſelf in. The former of them is not ſo uſually taken notice of, and inſiſted upon by thoſe who have laboured in the Diſcovery of the dreadful Corruption and Depravation of human Nature through the Fall of Man, as moſt other Evils flowing therefrom are. Hence Chriſtians generally are not ſo apprehenſive of the Infection of their Natures with this Evil, nor of the Evil and Sinfulneſs of it, as they are of others; neither do the inward workings of theſe Evils, make ſuch ſenſible Impreſſions upon the Mind, as the Workings of many others do; yea, as the former carries an Appearance of the Fruit of the Spirit, whence many take a ſtrong Inclination after new Notions and ſtrange Doctrines to be the Efforts of Love unto Truth; ſo the latter ſhrouds it ſelf under the Notion of an inſeparable Adjunct, or eſſential Property of humane Nature. Did but Chriſtians know and conſider their own Propenſity unto Error, and were more apprehenſive of the Influence Self-Love may have upon them, they would be more cautious of what Doctrines they embrace, and more jealous over themſelves, leſt it ſhould be Error that they have embraced inſtead of Truth, and conſequently more willing to attend to Light offered unto them. Hence it would be of ſingular Uſe unto Chriſtians to hearken to that Advice, tho given by an Heathen, γνῶθι σεάυτον. This I ſhall ſay, would but all that love our Lord Chriſt in Sincerity, throughly acquaint themſelves with the infinite Holineſs of God, and his holy Jealouſy; yea, and that with reference to his own People proceeding therefrom, and endeavour to recover their loſt Communion with the Holy-Ghoſt, and as apprehenſive and ſenſible

of

of their own Propenſity unto Error, with the Advantage it receives as to its holding the Mind in Captivity to it, from the evil Influences of the Remainders of Self-Love in them; and apply themſelves in an holy Awe and Dread of God, and Reliance upon our Lord Chriſt for the Teachings of his Spirit, to the ſtudy and ſearch of the Scriptures, taking in the benefit of thoſe Helps and Advantages afforded to them for the diſtinguiſhing Truth from Error, and all with an holy Reſolution to comply with Truth, and relinquiſh Error, as the one and the other is diſcovered to them; withall, communicating the Light received each unto other with a Spirit of Meekneſs; they would arrive to a greater Unity of Mind, Judgment and Practice, and thereby retreive the Glory of the Church with that holy Doctrine 'tis built upon, now greatly obſcured from the Eyes of Men through the ſad Diverſity of Doctrines, Opinions, and Practices too viſible among Chriſtians. In ſubſervency to this bleſſed End, I have in the enſuing Diſcourſe endeavoured to repreſent Chriſtians to themſelves, and ſhew them the danger they are in of taking up and embracing Error; and having once embraced it, of their tenaciouſly holding of it under a Notion of Truth; not having had a ſole reſpect to Chriſtians of any one Perſwaſion, the things therein offered (I hope) may be of ſome Uſe unto all. For beſides the Uſe they may be of in thoſe Reſpects pointed at in the Application, eſpecially conſidering the Times we are fallen into, and the Circumſtances we are under, to be awakened to an holy

Deus non ſingulis ſeorſum largiter Spiritum ſed pro gratiæ menſura cuiq; diſtribuit, ut Eccleſiæ membra viciſſim inter ſe communicando unitatem foveant. *Calv.*

holy Jealouſy of themſelves, and thereupon review their own Principles and Practices with the Scriptures they are bottomed upon, will be prejudicial unto none. Yet ſhall I not deny but that I have a peculiar reſpect to our Opponents in that Controverſie relating to the Covenant-Intereſt and Baptiſm of the Infant-Seed of Believers, that (if the Lord will) their Minds may be prepared for a ſerious Attention to, and through weighing of what is offered in thoſe few Sheets added in the cloſe, to evince that the Covenant of Circumciſion is indeed the Covenant of Grace; which would they but proceed in the Method before declared (ſo full and demonſtrative is the Evidence given thereunto throughout the whole Scriptures) ſure they could not but comply with, and conſequently that long Controverſy depending between them and us would haſten to a Period, it being at leaſt by many, and thoſe among the chief on either ſide, agreed, that the main Hinge of that Controverſy doth turn upon that Covenant. Could they prove that that Covenant was the old Covenant, it muſt be granted, that the ground we lay to Infants Covenant-Intereſt and Baptiſm therein muſt needs fall, and conſequently the Claim we bottom thereupon muſt be acknowledged to be vain: So, on the other hand, were they fully convinced that that Covenant is indeed the Covenant of Grace, they muſt acknowledg our Claim to be juſt: ſo much ſome of them have acknowledged. See Dr. Winter *of Infant Baptiſm.*

It is poſſible indeed that ſome may grant this Covenant to be the Covenant of Grace, and yet deny the Covenant-Intereſt and Baptiſm of the Infant-Seed of Believers, and that upon this Suppoſition, viz. *That Infants are not* Abraham's *Seed: But that Plea will ſoon appear exceeding inſignificant, ſeeing that by the Promiſe*

Promiſe its being extended to them, they are conſtituted his Seed. Abraham's *Seed in their Generations, conſtitutes but one Seed; the Text is plain* Gen. 17. 7. Seed in their Generations, *in the former part of the Verſe, is expreſſed by that ſingle Term* [*Seed*] *in the latter. And beſides, could it be proved (which it can never be) that they could not according to Scripture-warrant, be accounted* Abraham's *Seed; yet ſo long as the Promiſe runs to* Abraham's *Seed in their Generations, their Covenant-Intereſt and Baptiſm will ſtand firm. Hence to deny them to be* Abraham's *Seed, and on that ground to deny their Covenant-Intereſt and Baptiſm, will come to all one, as to deny their Covenant-Intereſt and Baptiſm abſolutely without any reſpect to that Suppoſition; ſeeing the ſame Arguments that prove their Covenant-Intereſt, proves them to be* Abraham's *Seed, at leaſt we are no way prejudiced by a denial that they are ſo. And this I add, to ſhew what will be expected from any that ſhall attempt to invalidate our Claim to their Covenant-Intereſt and Baptiſm, by that Suppoſition they muſt anſwer all our Arguments, and prove them unconcerned in the Covenant from other Topicks; otherwiſe whatſoever they ſhall ſay will ſignify nothing unto us.*

But not to detain the Reader any longer, any Apology for the Publication of the enſuing Diſcourſes, whether in regard of the matters and things treated of in them, the ſeaſon of their coming abroad, or their meanneſs and plainneſs, I conceive is either unneceſſary, or will be but of little uſe, at leaſt with reference to the end deſigned.

Only this may be ſaid, The things treated of are weighty; the general Deſign of the former is to convince Chriſtians of a Poſſibility, that they may take hold of, and

hold

hold fast Deceit and Error under a Notion of Truth, yea, that they are prone ſo to do, and this not only in matters of Faith and Religious Obſervance, but in matters of Practice in the ordinary courſe of their Lives and Converſations, and that to the ſubjecting themſelves to Divine Diſpleaſure, and thoſe Judgments that ſeem impendent, thereby to awaken them to an holy Jealouſy, leſt they ſhould have ſo done. The deſign of the latter, is to eſtabliſh and ſecure one of thoſe great Truths included in the Faith once delivered to the Saints, *wherein their Comfort is not a little concerned. And ſurely the nature and import of theſe Deſigns, ſecures their Purſuance from a charge of Unſeaſonableneſs, be the Times or State of Affairs what they will; yea, the Evil of the Days, with the Circumſtances we are under, makes it more eſpecially neceſſary; yet did I know of any thing extant of the ſame Import with the former of theſe Diſcourſes, it had probably been as an untimely Birth that ſees not the Sun. As for their meanneſs and plainneſs, I ſhall only ſay, that as to the former, it is but an Abſtract of ſome few Sermons preached to a plain Congregation, who rather deſire that their Souls ſhould be fed with the* ſincere Milk of the Word, *than their Fancies gratified with the words of Man's Wiſdom: and poſſibly the Sence may ſometimes ſeem ſomewhat obſcure, and the Sentence leſs coherent, through the Abbreviations made, than otherwiſe they would have been. And beſides, I have had all along conſiderable reſpect to the preſent Times: they ſeem to direct that Injunction,* Exod. 33. 5. *given to the People of* Iſrael, *to our ſelves; and 'tis applicable to Parents with reference to their Children, the Fruit of their Bodies, as well as to themſelves; and it may not unfitly be*

Libri quaſi liberi.

be applied to Authors, with reference to their Books, the Fruit of their Minds. Hence I have been ſo far from ſearching after what might (at leaſt to ſome) ſeem ornamental, that I have again and again laid aſide what was in my hand. And as for the latter, it deſigned the Eſtabliſhment of a particular Truth, required Scripture-Evidence with ſolid Solutions of the Objections and Argumentations it was attached by (wherein the Reader (I hope) will find it not wanting) rather than Rhetorical Flouriſhes or humane Authorities, which might have been multiplied in great abundance, it having had from firſt to laſt the Suffrage of almoſt the whole Univerſal Church. Neither am I out of hope, but that for the future our Opponents themſelves will be of the ſame Mind and Judgment, at leaſt that the Author, whoſe Diſcourſe occaſioned theſe few Sheets, will be ſo; having this hope concerning him, that however, through one means or another, his Underſtanding hath been biaſſed and bribed to a taking hold of Deceit, yet the tenderneſs of his Conſcience will not admit of a Defilement through the tenacious holding of it. And the Truth is, the Miſtake on his part is ſo palpable, and the oppoſite Truth ſo evident and plain throughout the whole Scriptures, that it is pitty it ſhould be eſpouſed, at leaſt tenaciouſly held by any but thoſe among whom it had its Riſe, viz. *thoſe whom God hath ſent ſtrong Deluſions.*

I ſhall only add, That to me there is ſo great a Probability, to ſay no more, that the Vials of the Wrath of God are pouring, yea, are far poured out upon the Antichriſtian Kingdom, and conſequently that the Witneſſes are on the riſing hand, that I cannot but hope the day is now haſtening when the Spirit ſhall be *more plentifully* poured forth from on high, *as the*

iſſue

iſſue whereof, all Conteſts of this nature ſhall ceaſe; all ſincere Saints being by him led into all Truth, and all that love and make a Lie, *having their Place without. In the mean time, let Brotherly Love continue, with mutual Endeavours to ſubſerve each other in the Knowledg of, and Eſtabliſhment in the Truth, and ſo edify one another in Faith and Holineſs, that we may be all found of our Lord Chriſt (who is one's as well as anothers,) in Peace, without Spot and blameleſs.*

Reader,

Thine in the Service

of the Goſpel;

J. Whiſton.

ERRATA.

PAge 4. in the Margent, read חוק. lin. 22, add before *Gen.* 48. P. 18. l. 23. r. *that.* P. 21. l. 24. put the period after *Chriſt.* P. 22. l. 12. r. *of.* P. 30. l. 5. r. *commends.* P. 33. l. 30. r. *and.* P. 52. f. 48. r. 10. P. 55. l. 34. r. *that.* P. 56. l. 24. blot out *from.* P. 57. l. 23 r. *word in the Verb.* P. 58. l. 18. r. *Cauſet.* P. 57. l. 24. r. *unaccountable.* P. 63. l. 27. put the ? after *Guilt.* P. 66. l. 21. r. *end.* P. 70. l. 31. r. *poſſeſſion.* P. 86. l. 28. r. *prize.* P. 100. l. 3. r. *came.* P. 131. l. 13. r. *were.* P. 111. l. 6. put the Period after *Covenant.* l. 18. r. *convey.* P. 115. l. 8. r. *Few.* P. 120. l. 14. dele *as.* l. 21. dele *that.* P. 126. l. 29. dele *thus.* P. 131. l. 27. add *of the condition.* P. 134. l. 30. r. *is.* P. 137. l. 35. r. *Charran.* P. 143. l. 12. r. *were.* P. 146. l. 15. dele *the.*

Jer. 8. 5.

They hold faſt Deceit; they refuſe to return.

THat God hath con-created with, or implanted in the natures of the very Brutes, certain Qualities or Powers, whence they both can and do act, in a ſubſerviency to their own Welfare and Well-beings, and that both negatively and poſitively; and that he hath not dealt worſe with Man, yea that he hath dealt better with him, *hath taught him more than the Beaſts of the Field, and made him wiſer than the Fowls of Heaven*, is obvious both to Reaſon, Senſe and Experience, and is often taken notice of, and improved by the Pen-men of the Scriptures; and among the reſt by our Prophet, and that for this end and purpoſe, *viz.* that he might the more effectually convince the Jews of their Folly and Stupidity, as well as Impiety, in refuſing, notwithſtanding all the means uſed to bring them thereunto, to return unto God, from whom they had at that time ſorely backſlidden: the Qualities and Powers of the brute Creatures, with their way of acting therefrom, with reference to their own Good, he takes notice of in the enſuing Context, thus ver. 7, *The Stork in the Heavens knoweth his ap-*

pointed times, and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow, obſerve the time of their coming. As theſe Creatures have a natural Sagacity or Inſtinct, whereby they know what Countries or Places at this or that time are moſt commodious for them; ſo they act anſwerably in continuing in, or removing from them; but ſaith the Prophet, *My People know not the Judgment of the Lord.* The endowments of Men, and how they improve them, in matters relating to the Welfare of the Body or outward Man, the Prophet, or rather the Lord by the Prophet, takes notice of in the Verſe immediately preceding our Text; *Shall they fall, and not ariſe? Shall he turn away, and not return?* that is, will a Man being fallen to the Ground, or in the Mire, not ariſe again? Surely no. Men may fall, but they will not lie and periſh, they will immediately ariſe again; *Shall he* (a change of the Perſon, but not of the Sence) *turn away, and not return?* that is, will a Man, being gone out of his right Path, not return? Men, tho they may, through one means or another, turn, or be turned out of their right Path, yet will upon the diſcovery thereof, return again. Now the Conſideration hereof the Prophet improves for the End before mentioned; *viz.* to convince the Jews of their Folly and Stupidity, as well as Impiety, in perſiſting in their Backſlidings, notwithſtanding the diſcoveries made, and dreadful Judgments denounced againſt them, upon the Account thereof. Hence he puts this admiring, as well as upbraiding Queſtion, in the foregoing part of the Verſe, wherein our Text lies; *Why then is this People of* Jeruſalem *ſlidden back by a perpetual Back-ſliding?* Implying

that

that they fell ſhort in that common Wiſdom and Prudence, that Nature it ſelf hath furniſhed all Men with. Men when fallen, will ariſe again; when turned out of the way, will return; but it was otherwiſe with this People: they were fallen, yet would not ariſe; they were turned out of the way, yet would not return; they were backſlidden from God and his Ways, and yet would not Repent and Return unto him. No, notwithſtanding all the Means uſed by him to bring them thereunto; yea they fell ſhort, in that Knowledg and Wiſdom that is in, and expreſt by, the very Brutes; as the following Context implies. Hence the Prophet might well admire at, and upbraid them, as here he doth, *Why then is this People of* Jeruſalem *ſlidden back, by a perpetual Back-ſliding?* or, as ſome read it, with *an obſtinate Rebellion?* Now the Prophet having thus endeavoured their Conviction, that he might be inſtrumental in their recovery from this their aſtoniſhing Obſtinacy, in their Backſliding or Rebellion; and conſequently for the prevention of thoſe Judgments which were impendent, immediately points at the Cauſe thereof, and that was their holding faſt Deceit: ſo in the Words deſigned as the Foundation to the enſuing Diſcourſe, *They hold faſt Deceit, they refuſe to return*; that is, therefore they *refuſe to return*, Or, they refuſe to return, becauſe they hold faſt Deceit.

In the Words then we have theſe two things conſiderable.

1. The intrinſick Root, Spring or Original Cauſe of the Jews Apoſtacy and Backſliding from God and his Ways, and that was *Deceit.* There was ſome Deceit embraced by them, which was the Root or Spring of their Apoſtacy; that's implyed.

2. We have the Cauſe of their obſtinate perſiſtance in this their Apoſtacy or Backſliding, and that was their Tenaciouſneſs of this Deceit. In a word, we have the Root and Spring of their Apoſtacy and Backſliding ſuppoſed, and the Cauſe or Reaſon of their perſiſtance propoſed. Briefly, to explain the Terms, and therewith ſhew the Genuine Sence and Meaning of the Holy Ghoſt in them; and I ſhall take them as they lie in order before us. *They hold faſt*] החזיקו, 'tis but one Word in the *Hebrew*, but a very emphatical one: the Seventy tranſlate it κατεκραταιώθησαν, they have ſtrengthned themſelves; ſo we tranſlate it, *Gen.* 2. and frequently elſewhere. Hence from this Hebrew word comes ἰσχύω in the Greek, *poſſum*, or *potens ſum*: Thus theſe Jews, they had ſo ſtrengthned and confirmed themſelves in Deceit, that they were now become ſtrong. They hold it with ſtrength. And hence it is that we fitly tranſlate, *They hold faſt Deceit.* The Word is uſed of *Pharaoh*, Exod. 8. 19. *Then the Magicians ſaid unto* Pharaoh, *This is the Finger of God. And* Pharaoh's *Heart was hearded, and he hearkened not unto them, as the Lord*

חנק *Multas habet ſignificationes ſed omnes inter ſe aliquam cognationem habent.* Boot.

had

had ſaid. Where the Seventy tranſlate it by σκληρύνω. The Word we have *Heb.* 3. 8. *Harden not your Hearts, as in the Provocation, &c.* So we may tranſlate in this place, They were hardned, or they have hardned themſelves in Deceit. They became obſtinate therein. *Durum quod non cedit tactui.* Thus their Hearts would not yield to the Word of God, by the Prophet; the Word had no influence upon their Hearts, to work a Conviction upon them. Elſewhere the Seventy tranſlate it by ἀνδρίζομαι, *viriliter ago:* So *Deut.* 31. 6, 7. & 23. We read, *Be ſtrong*; the Seventy, *Play the Man:* Thus here, theſe Jews, they play the Men in holding faſt their Deceit. The Lord complains, *Jer.* 9. 3. that they are not *Valiant for the Truth*, &c. but they were valiant for Deceit, they could play the Men in holding that faſt. Yet once more, the Word ſignifies to *Prevail*; 2 Sam. 24. 4. *Notwithſtanding the King's words prevailed*, &c. The Word which we here tranſlate *Hold faſt*, we there tranſlate *Prevailed. Joab*, tho loth to obey the King's Command, yet his Command prevailed over him. We have the Word again uſed in *Job* 2. 3. *And ſtill he holdeth faſt his Integrity*, that is, he prevailed in holding his Integrity. *Job* had his Diſcouragements in holding, yea he had many Temptations to let go his Integrity; Satan endeavoured with all his Might, to wring it out of his hands; his Wife ſollicites him to let it go; the Diſpenſations of God were no ſmall Temptation to him to part with it. The Pſalmiſt was well nigh brought to part with his Integrity, through the like Diſpenſation of God towards him: as may be ſeen by comparing *Pſalm* 73. beginning,

with 13. Yet *Job* prevails over, and conquers all, *ſtill holding faſt his Integrity.*

Thus was it with the Jews, in an evil Sence; they wanted not a ſufficiency of Means for their Conviction, they wanted not fore-warnings of the Miſeries which they would bring upon themſelves; but they prevailed over, and conquered all, and ſtill held faſt their Deceit, and thereupon refuſed to Return. Yet further, the Word ſignifies, not only, *to hold*, or, *to hold faſt*; but alſo to *receive*, *take up*, or *take hold of*; 2 *Sam.* 15. 5. It's ſaid there of *Abſalom*, *When any Man came nigh to him to do him obeyſance, he put forth his hand, and took him and kiſſed him.* The Seventy turn it both by λαμβάνω & καταλαμβάνω. *Pagnine* reads it *Apprehenderunt*, in our Text: and ſo it notes the freeneſs and readineſs of the Jews to receive this Deceit; they readily received and took it up, and thereupon held it faſt. Yea, they ſtrengthned and confirmed, yea hardned themſelves in it; they play the Men, improve all their Parts and Abilities to maintain it, and do actually prevail over, and conquer all Means uſed, to convince them of, and reclaim them from it.

They hold faſt Deceit; the Word uſed is בתרמית, the Seventy read ἐν τῇ προαιρέσει, they ſtrengthned themſelves in their Choice, implying the cloſure of their Wills with their Deceit; and thence in part it was that they held it ſo faſt. The Word ſeems to include a Notion of Subtilty, Cunning or Craft in it: hence we read it, *Subtilty*, Gen. 27. 35. *And he ſaid, thy Brother came with Subtilty*, &c. And indeed all Deceit muſt have ſomewhat of Cunning or Subtilty in it, otherwiſe it would

would bewray it ſelf, and conſequently become its own Antidote: ſeeing no Man will ordinarily embrace Deceit as known to be ſo. The Hook muſt be well covered, otherwiſe the Fiſh will not meddle with it. Deceit muſt have ſomewhat of Craft to conceal it. Hence Seducers are ſaid to have their Slights and cunning Craftineſs, whereby they lye in wait to deceive, *Eph.* 4. 14. The ſilliest of Women (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) would hardly otherwiſe be led away by them. Thus here the Jews hold faſt ſubtile or cunning Deceit; Deceit cunningly contrived and obtruded upon them. But what was this Deceit? I Anſwer, Some take Deceit for thoſe Evils, whether Religious, as Idolatry; or Moral, as Impieties in their Converſations, that the Jews were ſeduced into: but I rather conceive (with others) we are to underſtand *Fraudes Pſeudo-Prophetarum*; the falſe Doctrines preached by the falſe Prophets. So the Word is uſed by this our Prophet, *Jer.* 14. 14. *Then the Lord ſaid unto me, The Prophets propheſy lies in my Name, I ſent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither ſpake unto them: they propheſy unto you a falſe Viſion, and Divination, and a thing of nought, and the Deceit of their Heart.* Where we have the ſame Word; *Deceit* in the latter part of the Verſe, is the ſame with Lies, and a falſe Viſion, in the former part. Theſe falſe Prophets under a pretence of revealing the Will of God to them, had preached Lyes or Deceits. As for inſtance, that they having the Temple of the Lord among them, they muſt neceſſarily have his Preſence with, and his Providence watching over them. Hence is that Boaſting, Jer. 7. 4. *The Temple of the Lord, the*

Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are theſe. The falſe Prophets having cunningly pretended themſelves true Prophets, teach ſuch falſe Doctrine. This takes with their corrupt Inclinations, and they greedily embrace it, and having embraced it, hold it faſt, and will by no means be brought to relinquiſh it; whereupon they refuſed to Return. The Word we tranſlate to *Refuſe*, hath again its Emphaſis; it ſignifieth not barely to Refuſe, but to Refuſe with a certain Loathing or Abhorrency. It is proper (ſaith Mr. *Caryl*) to the nauſeating of the Stomack, at the ſight of ſome filthy thing. We have it uſed of *Naboth*'s refuſing to ſell *Ahab* his Vineyard, 1 *Kings* 21. 15. And with what vehemency he refuſed it, the third Verſe declares. The Seventy tranſlate it, in *Prov.* 1. 24. οὐκ ἐπακούσατε, They would not hear. So theſe Jews here, they refuſed to Return, nay they would not ſo much as hear of Returning. The very calling them to Return, as it were, turned their Stomacks againſt the true Prophets. It notes the ſtrange Efficacy of Errour; their Minds were ſo bewitched with it that they could hardly give the true Prophets the Hearing; they loathed to hear or think of Returning. They refuſed to Return, to be Converted, ſaith *Junius*.

The Sence lies plain, they would neither change their Minds, in reſpect of the Deceit they had taken up and entertained, nor return from their Sins, or ſinful Practices, unto God and his Ways.

The Words being opened, there are three Doctrines lie obvious in them.

I. *That*

I. *That Sin in Practice is ordinarily the fruit of ſome Errour or Deceit in the Underſtanding.*

This I ſhall but touch upon in *tranſitu.* Only let it be obſerved, That Errour or Deceit I take here, and ſo ſhall do in the enſuing Diſcourſe, in the largeſt Sence, *viz.* For any Notion, Apprehenſion or Reaſoning, that the Mind of Man is incident unto, (and they are innumerable;) that diſagrees with, or is contrary unto that Syſtem of Divine Truth, contained in the Scriptures.

Now I ſay, that all Sin is ordinarily the Fruit of ſome Errour, ſome falſe Notion, Miſtake or Miſapprehenſion in the Underſtanding. *A deceived Heart hath turned him aſide*, ſaith God of an Idolater, *Iſa.* 44.20. The ſame may be ſaid of Sinners in general, *A deceived Heart hath turned* them *aſide.* Hence Sins in the general are called Errours, Pſal. 19.12. *Who can underſtand his Errours?* that is, *his Sins.* So the High-Prieſt is ſaid to offer that Blood, which he carried into the Holieſt of all, for *himſelf, and for the Errours of the People*, *Heb.* 9.7. that is, *the Sins of the People.* Hence; whereas we read, Job 5.24. *Thou ſhalt viſit thy Habitation, and ſhalt not ſin:* the Hebrew is, and ſome Margents read it, *And ſhalt not Err.* As ſinning is the erring or deviating from the right Rule; ſo all Sin ordinarily is the Fruit of ſome Errour, or Deceit in the Underſtanding. This holds true of Sins of Omiſſion, as well as of Commiſſion, and is eminently true, of the Sins that are found with the People of God; I mean it of ſuch Sins, as they live and allow themſelves in; and that there

are

are found ſuch Sins with them, and that both of Omiſſion and Commiſſion, cannot be denied; but they do not, they indeed cannot live, or allow themſelves in any known Sin. 1 John 3. 6. *Whoſoever abideth in him* (*viz.* Jeſus Chriſt) *ſinneth not. i.e.* He lives not in any way of, nor allows himſelf in the leaſt known Sin. What Sins he lives or allows himſelf in, they are the Fruit of ſome Errour or Deceit, that the Underſtanding hath taken up and entertained. It may be ſaid, *A deceived Heart hath turned him aſide.* All Sins, whether found with the Men of the World, or with the Saints, are ordinarily the Fruit of ſome Errour or Deceit in their Underſtandings: I ſay, they are ordinarily ſo, becauſe I ſhall not determine that Queſtion, *An neceſſe ſit errare eum qui peccat in eo quod peccat.* But this will be found true ordinarily, where Men are turned aſide into any way of Sin, yea or into any particular Sin, that it's *a deceived Heart hath turned* them *aſide.* And this may be further added, That as all Sin is ordinarily the Fruit of ſome Errour, ſo all Errour is ordinarily productive of ſome Sin, either by way of Omiſſion or of Commiſſion. As Errour it ſelf is a Sin, ſo it and Sin are Correlates; the former as the Root, the latter as the Fruit. Where there is Errour as the Root, there will be ſome Sin as the Fruit; and where there is Sin as the Fruit, it may be concluded that there is Errour as the Root within. But this is not that which I intend to inſiſt upon.

Uſe. Let this Exhort Believers, (yea all in General) to be jealous of their Underſtandings. Believers they may, and too often do allow themſelves in

in ſuch Sins, as are greatly diſpleaſing to our Lord Chriſt, and yet perceive it not; and the reaſon is, becauſe, *a deceived Heart hath turned* them *aſide.* Their Practice, 'tis true, correſponds with the Light of their Underſtandings, but there is too much Darkneſs mingled with that Light, and that they diſcern not: For we ſhall find that ſincere Chriſtians, too often are not ſo jealous of their Underſtandings, as they ſhould be. They are careful that their Practice comes up to, and is commenſurate with their Knowledg, but ſuſpect not that Deceit (which in the State of Imperfection) they are incident unto.

From hence are theſe various Evils, which are found amongſt Profeſſors: one is really Covetous, another Proud, another Voluptuous, and another lives in the open neglect of the Commands of Jeſus Chriſt; and yet probably their Conſciences check them not: and the Reaſon is, There is ſome Deceit, ſome Errour in the Underſtanding, by means whereof Conſcience diſcerns not thoſe Evils; and the great Reaſon of this is, that they are not ſufficiently jealous of their own Underſtandings, nor ſuſpect themſelves to lie under any Deceit.

And therefore, as we ought to hold our Integrity, with the like ſtedfaſtneſs that *Job* did, and according to his Reſolution, *Job* 27. 6. nor give any occaſion to our own Hearts to reproach us; ſo we ought to exerciſe an holy jealouſy over our Hearts, leſt any Deceit lodging in them, they ſhould turn us aſide into Ways or Actions, for which our Lord Chriſt may, and probably will, if not condemn, yet ſharply reprove and correct us. But of this more hereafter. II. *That*

II. *That not only the Men of the World, but even the People of God themſelves may, yea are, prone to take up and embrace Errour, inſtead of Truth; and having taken it up, they too commonly are exceeding tenacious of it.*

In the Proſecution of this Doctrine, (tho I ſhall have a peculiar reſpect to Men's Tenaciouſneſs of Errour, when embraced by them, yet) I ſhall ſpeak ſomewhat to their Propenſity, to take it up and embrace it inſtead of Truth: And anſwerably I ſhall do theſe three things.

Firſt, Offer ſomewhat for the Illuſtration and Confirmation of it.

Secondly, Shew whence it is, that ſo it is. And,

Thirdly, Make ſome Application. For the

Firſt, And thus the Doctrine may be abundantly proved from various Conſiderations. But to mention ſome few of them, As

1. From the Conſideration of the Nature and Quality of Errours, that are taken up and tenaciouſly held by ſome Men.

2. The ſlight Grounds Men will take up Errours upon, with the ſtrange ſhifts they will uſe for their own Defence and Juſtification, in their holding of them.

3. Their apparent Diſſonancy from, yea (as to ſome) direct Contrariety to, plain and expreſs Scripture.

4. The utter inconſiſtency of the Embracement, and holding ſuch Errours with Men's own Intereſts, and that both internal and external; and conſequently their want of any rati-

rational Inducements to do the one or the other.

5. Men's obſtinate refuſal of the Means offered for their Information and Conviction.

Theſe things, with others of a like Nature, plainly ſhew how ſtrangely prone Men are to take up, and embrace Errour, inſtead of Truth; and tenaciouſly to hold it, when once taken up and embraced by them. But (deſigning Brevity) I ſhall not inſiſt upon theſe things; but only Illuſtrate and Confirm, what is affirmed, by way of Inſtance; and I ſhall confine my ſelf to theſe two or three: only premiſing this, That what the Scripture records, either of the proneneſs of any particular Perſon, to embrace Errour inſtead of Truth, or of their Tenaciouſneſs of it when embraced, that is not to be underſtood as tho thoſe Evils were peculiar and proper to thoſe particular Perſons; but they declare the Caſe of Men in general, as in this depraved and corrupted State reſpective unto Errour. Theſe Inſtances ſhew the Nature and Property of Men in general, how prone and propenſe they are unto Errour, both to take it up and embrace it inſtead of Truth, and how tenacious uſually they are of it, when taken up and embraced by them.

This being premiſed, I ſhall firſt inſtance in the *Galatians*; and they are a ſtrange Inſtance in ſpecial, of the proneneſs of Men, yea of ſuch as are truly Regenerate (for ſo undoubtedly many of them were) to take up and embrace Errour inſtead of Truth. The Apoſtle ſpeaks to them on this Account, as tho they had been bewitched: Gal. 3. 1. *O Fooliſh Galatians, who hath bewitched you,*

you, that you ſhould not obey the Truth? &c. He hath a reſpect to their ſtrange Infatuation, in relinquiſhing the Truth, and their embracing Errour in the ſtead of it: they ſeemed rather to be bewitched, than by ordinary Means, and in an ordinary Way, to be drawn thereunto. It is of no great Concern to know what kind of Witch-craft, the Apoſtle hath reference unto; whether that performed by the Eye, that performed by uttering hard, uncouth and unintelligible Words; or that (however performed) whereby things are repreſented to the Eye in Forms, Shapes or Appearances, quite differing from what properly are their own. He might have reference to any of theſe kinds of Witchcrafts, according to the different derivation of the Word uſed by him. But be the Witchcraft of what kind it will, ſuch was their Infatuation, that he ſpeaks to them, as tho bewitched. And the ſtrangeneſs of their Infatuation will appear, if we conſider theſe three things;

1. The Difference between the Truth relinquiſhed on the one hand, and the Errour or Errours (take it as a ſingle or complicated Errour) on the other hand, taken up and embraced by them.

2. By the Conſideration of ſundry things, peculiarly remarkable in their Caſe, which even according to Principles of Reaſon, ſhould have been engaging unto them to a ſtedfaſt Adherence unto the Truth.

3. The Conſideration of the ſuddenneſs and eaſineſs of the falſe Teachers, bringing them over to relinquiſh the Truth, and to embrace the contrary Errour.

To touch upon theſe three things a little diſtinctly, yet with what brevity I may.

1. Let us conſider the Difference, between the Truth they had relinquiſhed, and the Errour they had embraced.

The Truth relinquiſhed, is contained in the Doctrine of the Goſpel, preached by the true Apoſtles; the Errour they embraced, was contained in the Doctrine of the falſe Teachers.

Now let us a little compare theſe different Doctrines the one with the other. As for the Doctrine of the Goſpel, *It is* (as the Apoſtle tells us) *a Doctrine worthy of all Acceptation*, 1 Tim. 1. 15. It is a Doctrine of ſuch Excellency, Worth and Benefit unto Men, that it puts a Beauty upon the very Feet of the Publiſhers of it, *Iſa.* 52. 7. In brief, we may take this ſummary Account of it, That it is a Doctrine revealing and offering unto all in general, and aſſuring to all thoſe in particular, that ſincerely Believe, Embrace and Practiſe according to it, full and compleat Juſtification, Peace with God, and Adoption, with ſuitable Affections and Actings from God, the in-dwelling Preſence of the Spirit, with perfect Sanctification, gradually to be wrought by him, and at laſt an *Eternal Weight of Glory*. And all this from the meer Grace, Mercy and Love of God, through the alone Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt. This was the Doctrine which the *Galatians* had formerly embraced, but now relinquiſhed. And we may rationally conclude, that upon their embracement of it, they had taſted of the bleſſed Effects thereof, in the Peace of their Conſciences, with unſpeakable Joy, and the Comforts flowing therefrom.

Hence

Hence in part was that Bleſſedneſs they gloried in, *Gal.* 4. 15. How welcome muſt ſuch a Doctrine needs be to poor Sinners, awakened to a Senſe of their Sin and Miſery, by reaſon of it! According to the Principles of Reaſon, ſuch a Doctrine, with the Bleſſedneſs enjoyed upon their embracement of it, ſhould have ſo commended it ſelf to their Underſtandings, Wills and Affections, as that any Doctrine inconſiſtent with, or contrary unto it, ſhould have been rejected with the greateſt Abhorrency.

2. Let us conſider, what the Doctrine of the falſe Teachers was. And here it may be obſerved, that their Doctrine did not lie in an abſolute and total Contrariety to the Doctrine of the Goſpel; the Doctrine of the Goſpel was only perverted by it. Gal. 1. 6, 7.

Theſe falſe Apoſtles, did not deny the neceſſity of Faith in Chriſt, nor did they deny it to be the Duty of his Diſciples, to obey all his Commands, nor did they (ſo far as we read) deny the neceſſity of taking up of his Croſs, when called thereunto; tho by their preaching of that Doctrine, they deſigned their own ſecurity from it, as laid upon Chriſtians by the Jews: So much the Apoſtle tells them, *Gal.* 6. 12. But they did not abſolutely deny it to be the Duty of Chriſtians, to bear Afflictions for the ſake of Chriſt, when juſtly called thereunto. So that their Doctrine did not releaſe from either the Yoke or Burden of Jeſus Chriſt; which had it done, it might have been ſome Inducement to them to embrace it; but that it did not do. But then it may be ſaid;

Queſt.

Queſt. *Wherein did their Doctrine differ from the Doctrine of the Goſpel, preached by the true Apoſtles?* And conſequently, *What was the Truth theſe* Galatians *had relinquiſhed, and the Errour they had embraced, and taken up in the ſtead of it?*

In brief thus.

Anſw. The falſe Teachers preached up a neceſſity of obſerving and keeping the Law, and that both Moral and Ceremonial, in a Conjunction with Faith in Chriſt, and Obedience to his Precepts; and that as a joint Cauſe with Chriſt, of their enjoyments of the Benefits and Bleſſings of the Goſpel. They did not Preach up the neceſſity of obſerving and keeping the Law, meerly as a Medium, or Means of their enjoying the Bleſſings and Benefits of the Goſpel through Chriſt, or as *Cauſa ſine qua non*, as that without which they could not enjoy Chriſt, or any Benefits by him; which had they done, it had not been ſo bad, tho very bad. But this was not all, for they join the obſervation of the Law with Chriſt, as having a like Influence on, or the ſame kind of cauſality in their Juſtification or Salvation, that Jeſus Chriſt himſelf has. So that the Truth that theſe *Galatians* had relinquiſhed was this, *viz.* That all the Benefits and Bleſſings of the Goſpel, are granted to, and beſtowed upon Men, meerly by, or from the free Grace of God through Jeſus Chriſt; and that it is Faith alone that Unites Men unto, and Intereſts them in Chriſt; and conſequently, gives them a Right to all thoſe Benefits and Bleſſings. The Errour that they had embraced, conſiſted in theſe two Branches.

1. That there was a neceſſity of obſerving and keeping the Law of *Moſes*.

2. That their obſerving and keeping that Law, had a joint Concurrence with Chriſt, in purchaſing and procuring Goſpel-Benefits and Bleſſings for them.

Now let it be obſerved, That as by Preaching up the neceſſity of keeping the Law, they brought the Perſons embracing their Doctrine, under the Yoke of the Law: which as *Peter* tells the Jews, in *Acts* 15. 10. was a Yoke, that neither they nor their fore-fathers could bear. So by preaching up the obſervation of the Law for ſuch an end, they brought them under an internal Bondage; a Bondage worſe than the Yoke of the Law, as to the matter of it was, *viz.* The Bondage of Guilt, even the Guilt of all their Sins, with variety of Fears, Terrours and Diſquietments of Conſcience, ariſing from a Conſciouſneſs thereof. And let it be ſuppoſed, that thoſe *Galatians* were not apprehenſive of their total Deprivation of the Grace of God, or any Benefit by Chriſt, that the embracement of the Doctrine (at leaſt ſhould they finally adhere thereunto) would ſubject them to, and conſequently, were not ſenſible of their being under the Bondage of Guilt, in an abſolute Sence, but might have ſome hope of Pardon, through their obſervation of the Law, conjoined with Chriſt in whom they yet believed; yet this Doctrine muſt needs bring them under a Bondage of variety of Fears, Terrours and Perplexities of Conſcience. Hence the Apoſtle tells them, that the Law gendered unto Bondage, *Gal.* 4. 9. with the 24. So that by the embracement of that Doctrine

ctrine, they did bring themſelves under an internal Bondage: And that theſe two ways:

1. The very Preaching of this Doctrine, did imply an Inſufficiency in Chriſt, to be a Means of, or by himſelf alone, of their enjoyment of all the Benefits and Bleſſings of the Goſpel: for otherwiſe, to what purpoſe ſhould the Obſervation of the Law be adjoined unto Chriſt, as a joint Cauſe with him, of their enjoying of them?

2. They would (being unable to keep the Law in perfection) be at an uncertainty when they had ſo obſerved and kept it, as that they might be ſure of their enjoying thoſe Benefits and Bleſſings. Hence varieties of Fears, Terrours and Perplexities of Conſcience, muſt neceſſarily ariſe; for this will be found in Experience, if Men once call in Queſtion, either the Sufficiency of the Grace of God to beſtow, or of Chriſt to purchaſe, and procure for them, all the Good promiſed in the Goſpel; and thereupon, conceit a neceſſity of adjoining any thing of their own unto Chriſt, as a joint Cauſe with him of their enjoyment of that Good; they will be utterly at a loſs, to determine when they have added enough of their own, ſo as aſſuredly to promiſe to themſelves, the enjoyment of that Good, and conſequently, muſt needs be in Bondage, under variety of Fears and Perplexities. And from hence thoſe Fears, Doubts and Perplexities of Conſcience, found in, and in part allowed by the Church of *Rome*, have their Riſe. I remember an Anonymous Author of the Church of *Rome*, upbraids *Luther* with his Confeſſing himſelf, before his full underſtanding of the Doctrine of free Juſtification by Chriſt alone, to be of a trou-

bled Conſcienee, and full of Doubts and Perplexities: as thoſhat had been an Argument of the Wickedneſs of his Heart, when as it was the neceſſary Effect of their own Doctrine, and only argued *Luther*'s Conſcience to be more throughly awakened and enlightned, than his own was. 'Tis certain, that when a Sinner comes to be throughly awakened, and to have his Conſcience throughly convinced, and thereupon comes to ſee his own loſt and undone Condition, 'tis nothing but a pure Faith, a cloſing in with, a relyance upon, or a truſting in a naked Chriſt, that can relieve him. So long as he ſuppoſes a neceſſity of adjoining any thing of his own unto Chriſt, his Diſquietments and Perplexities will remain. So that this Doctrine taught by the falſe Teachers, did not only bring the *Galatians*, under the external and unſupportable Yoke of the Law, but did ſubject them unto an unſupportable internal Bondage of Fears, Doubts and Perplexities of Conſcience; and this they might have eaſily foreſeen, would be (as they did after Experience, that it was) the Iſſue of their relinquiſhing the Truth, and their embracing of that Errour. Yet for them to do the one and the other, argued their ſtrange Infatuation. But

Secondly, Let us Conſider, Some of thoſe things peculiarly remarkable in their Caſe; which (even according to Principles of Reaſon) ſhould have been engaging unto them, to a ſtedfaſt Adherence to the true Doctrine of the Goſpel, and conſequently, to a Rejection of the Errour embraced by them.

To inſtance in theſe ſix.

1. There

1. There was the Priority of their Inſtruction in, and Embracement of the Truth of the Goſpel. Now there is ſcarce any thing (if any thing at all) conduces more to Mens eſtabliſhment in any Doctrine, Opinion or Practice, than to be inſtructed in, and have the Mind prepoſſeſſed with it. 'Tis one main Cauſe of many Men's obſtinate Adherence to Popiſh Doctrines, and Practices, *viz.* That they have been primarily inſtructed and brought up in them. And the like may be ſaid of many Mens firm Adherence to the Doctrine and Practice of Proteſtantiſm. Hence the Preachers of any Doctrine (be it true or falſe) lie under no ſmall diſadvantage as to Succeſs, when they are (ſo to ſpeak) to play an after-Game, when the Minds of Men are prepoſſeſſed with a contrary Belief, Opinion or Perſuaſion. The Conſideration of this was one Reaſon of the Apoſtle's Admiration, Gal. 1.6. *I marvel* (ſaith he) *that you are ſo ſoon removed from him, that called you into the Grace of Chriſt, unto another Goſpel.* Not only, that they ſhould be ſo ſoon removed (of which hereafter) but that they ſhould ever be removed from him, who had called them into the Grace of Chriſt by him. It is true, ſome underſtand God, but I ſhall rather (with *Beza* and *Piſcator*) underſtand it of *Paul* himſelf, and take ἐν χάριτι *pro* εἰς χάριτα, *Into the Grace*, that is, the Doctrine of Grace expreſſed to Men through Chriſt: and this Sence the Antitheſis (as *Piſcator* obſerves) ſeems neceſſarily to require. This made their embracement of that falſe Doctrine ſo ſtrange, in that they thereby were removed from another Doctrine, *viz.* The true Doctrine of the Goſpel, that they

had before been inſtructed in, and had embraced.

2. There was the clearneſs and plainneſs of thoſe Revelations made unto them, of the Truth of the Goſpel. They had not the Myſteries of the Goſpel, held forth in obſcure Types and Shadows, as the Jews before had; but the Vail was now taken off, and they had the Myſtery of God in Chriſt plainly revealed; they had Chriſt ſet forth as crucified before their Eyes, with the full End and Deſign of God in his Miſſion, Humiliation and Sufferings, with the Fulneſs and Redemption in, and obtained by him thereby, fully manifeſted: they had the exceeding Riches of the Grace of God in him plainly declared; this the Apoſtle takes notice of once and again, and that as an Aggravation of their Folly: So in *Chap.* 3. 1. and again in *Chap.* 4. 9. While they were in their Heatheniſm, and knew not the true God, it was no wonder, tho they did Service to Idols, that by Nature were not God; yea tho they were carried away, *Prout rapi contigiſſet*, as ſome tranſlate that, 1 *Cor.* 12. 2. ſometimes to Worſhip and Serve one Idol, ſometimes another, ſometimes to Worſhip and Serve them one way, ſometimes another, as the Apoſtle there intimates that they were: Yea had they been proſelited to the Jewiſh Church, when Chriſt, and the Myſtery of Salvation by him was more darkly revealed; it had not been ſo much tho they had been removed from the Doctrine of the Goſpel, as then held forth, into another Doctrine: But that now, after Chriſt had been evidently ſet forth, as Crucified before their Eyes, and God had been clearly revealed to them, and that

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in the Riches of his Grace and Mercy, as the Apoſtle, *Gal.* 2. 21. and *Gal.* 5. 4. not obſcurely intimates that he had been; that they ſhould relinquiſh the Truth, and embrace another Doctrine, this did greatly aggravate their Folly. *Quam indignum eſt in medio Lucis tam turpiter errare!* ſaith *Calvin.*

3. There was the Confirmation, that the Doctrine of the Goſpel, had received by the Apoſtle *Paul*'s working of Miracles amongſt them. Thus Gal. 3. 5. *He therefore that miniſtreth to you the Spirit, and worketh Miracles among you, doth he it by the Works of the Law, or by the Hearing of Faith?* That is, doth he it as a Miniſter, or Preacher of the Law, or as a Miniſter, or Preacher of the Doctrine of the Goſpel? The Interrogation vehemently denies the former, and aſſerts the latter. So that the Apoſtle, had not only preached the Goſpel to them, but had confirmed it with miraculous Works. Now the miraculous Works wrought by Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and by the Apoſtles, were the great Means ordained of God, for the evidencing to the World, that both their Miſſion, and Doctrine were from himſelf; and they were ſufficient for that end and purpoſe: and hence, left all Men without Excuſe, who did reject either Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, his Apoſtles, or the Doctrine preached by them. Hence is that of our Lord Chriſt, *John* 15. 22. compared with 24.

4. There was yet this further in their Caſe, That many of them, through the Preaching of the Goſpel, had themſelves received the Spirit, and that to renew and ſanctify their Natures, and to dwell in them. Whereby not only that Doctrine

was further confirmed unto them, but they had taſted and experienced the Benefit thereof. *Gal.* 4. 2, 5.

(1.) They had the Doctrine preached by the Apoſtle, further confirmed, and that in the ſureſt and moſt infallible way poſſible. And therefore, the Apoſtle puts a peculiar Emphaſis upon this, Τοῦτο μόνον θέλω μαθεῖν ἀφ' ὑμῶν, Gal. 3. 2. as if this Conſideration alone were ſufficient (as indeed it was) to evince the Truth of that Doctrine, he had preached unto them. 'Tis true, both the Teachers and Embracers of a falſe Doctrine may do wonderful things, ſuch as ſeem to be miraculous, tho really they are not ſo. Satan may by his Agents and Inſtruments, produce wonderful Effects; ſo it is ſaid of the Man of Sin, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 9. that his coming ſhould be *after the working of Satan, with all Power, and Signs, and lying Wonders.* This was one ſpecial Means, whereby the Kingdom of Antichriſt, was erected and raiſed up to that Grandeur it did at laſt arrive to. Hence for any Doctrine to be the Miniſtration of the Spirit, for the regenerating, renewing, and ſanctifying the Natures of Men, is a more infallible Evidence of its being from God, than the bare working of Wonders by the Preachers or Embracers of it, is. Now ſuch was the Doctrine of the Goſpel, preached by the Apoſtle to the *Galatians.*

(2.) They had hereby a taſte, and experience of the Good and Benefit of that Doctrine. Next to the Gift of Chriſt, the Spirit is the greateſt Gift communicable from God himſelf unto Men. The Gift of the Spirit includes all Good; *Matth.* 7. 11. compared with *Luke* 11. 13. Now, for them to reject

reject the Goſpel, and embrace another Doctrine, by which they could not expect the like Benefit, argued their ſtrange and dreadful Infatuation.

5. There were the Sufferings, they had undergone for the true Doctrine of the Goſpel, which they might eaſily have foreſeen would be in vain, and uſeleſs to them, by their relinquiſhing that Doctrine, and embracing another. Men according to the natural Notions they have of God, may and do expect much Benefit by any Sufferings they undergo for Conſcience ſake, or for and on the account, of any Doctrine they have received as from him.

We can hardly ſuppoſe that *Socrates*, acting only according to the meer Light of Nature, would have laid down his Life in defence of that great Truth, *That there is but one God*, had he not expected a plenary Reward from God. Now as Men from the very natural Notions they have of God, may and do expect a ſatisfactory Reward for ſuch Sufferings, as theſe we now ſpeak of; ſo the Goſpel aſſures the Embracers of it, that this Reward ſhall be exceeding Great; and alſo declares wherein it ſhall conſiſt, and when to be enjoyed. *Mat.* 19. at the latter end. *Luke* 6. 22,23. 2 *Cor.* 4. the latter end, *&c.*

Now theſe *Galatians*, had not only theſe natural Notions of God, that are common to all Men, but they had theſe Aſſurances of the Goſpel: Hence it may be rationally concluded, that they ſometime had very great hopes of a glorious Reward, for thoſe Sufferings which they had undergone. To theſe Hopes, the Apoſtle may alſo have

have reference, in that *Gal.* 4. 13. where he puts them in mind of their boaſting of Bleſſedneſs, *viz.* in which they were, at preſent; but more eſpecially hoped to be made partakers of, through their embracement of, practiſing according to, and their Sufferings for, that Doctrine which he had delivered unto them. Hence ſuppoſe, that the Doctrine preached by the Apoſtle *Paul*, had been a falſe Doctrine; yet in reaſon the hopes they had already conceived of ſo great a Reward, might even have blinded their Minds and perverted their Judgments, ſo as to have firmly adhered thereunto and rejected any other Doctrine, contrary unto or inconſiſtent with it. We ſee what a ſtrange Influence the Pleaſures Men have in, and the hopes of Profit and Advantage, which they have from the Ways of Sin, have upon their Hearts, both to blind their Minds, and bribe their Judgments, againſt their embracing of the Goſpel. But now, ſuppoſe the Doctrine preached by the Apoſtle, to be true, and that Doctrine preached by the falſe Apoſtles, to be falſe, (as it can hardly be imagined, that they were above all ſuppoſitions, that they might be ſo;) how great Looſers might they have eaſily foreſeen that they ſhould be? and yet for them, by relinquiſhing of that Doctrine they had received from the Apoſtle *Paul*, and their embracing that Doctrine from the falſe Apoſtles, to give up all their Hopes, of any Bleſſings and Benefits by all their paſt Sufferings; this argued, the ſtrange Influence that Errour had upon their Minds.

Laſtly, To inſtance only in one thing more, and that is, the ſtrength and fervency of their Affections to the Apoſtle *Paul*, as Preaching the true Do-

Doctrine of the Goſpel unto them. What a high value for, and what fervent Affections towards him, had they? See Chap. 4. 14, 15. *They received him as an Angel of God*; and as he there tells them, could have plucked out their own Eyes, and given them to him. Now it's uſually found, that ordinary Profeſſors, are very much led to the embracement of, and ſtedfaſtneſs in any Doctrine or Practice, by the value they have for, and the love they have to the Preachers of it. Hence it was, that the falſe Teachers endeavoured by all means imaginable, to lower the Churches eſteem of, and to alienate their Affections from the Apoſtle *Paul*; and on the other hand, to commend themſelves to them, and to inſinuate themſelves into their Affections; So the Apoſtle *Paul*, was ſo careful to keep up his Reputation among them, and retain their Affections towards him: for this cauſe it is, that he was ſo frequent, and large, in the vindicating of himſelf, from the unjuſt Cenſures and Calumnies he was loaded with, and in (ſeemingly) boaſting of his own Endowments, Actions, Sufferings, and Vouchſafements, and that to ſuch a Degree, as had he not (as himſelf ſpeaks) been compelled thereunto, had been inexpedient, yea, had ſavoured of Folly for him to have done it. Both the one, and the other knew, that the value Chriſtians have for, and the fervency of Affections, they bear towards their Teachers, have no ſmall Intereſt, in their ready embracement of, and firm adherence to the Doctrines taught by them. But that's the ſecond Conſideration, to ſhew the ſtrange Infatuation of theſe *Galatians*; and conſequently, in them we may ſee the marvellous Proneneſs,

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and Propenſity of Men; yea of thoſe that are truly regenerate (while in this imperfect State) unto Errour, and anſwerably, to take up and embrace that inſtead of Truth. But

3. Let us conſider, how ſoon they were brought to relinquiſh Truth, and embrace Errour. This the Apoſtle admires, ſee *Gal.* 1. 6. *I marvel* (ſaith he) ὅτι οὕτως ταχέως, that you are ſo ſoon, ſo quickly, or ſo eaſily removed from him, that called you into another Goſpel: That οὕτως ταχέως, may refer, either to the Apoſtles preaching the Goſpel unto them, and their embracement of it; or to their embracement of that Doctrine, they had now embraced from the falſe Teachers, whereby the Goſpel was perverted. According to the former Reference, the Apoſtle upbraids their Inconſtancy; according to the latter, their Levity; and he may, as juſtly he might, upbraid them with both, more eſpecially the latter. The falſe Apoſtles, it ſeemeth, found little Difficulty, in turning them from the Truth of the Goſpel, to the embracement of thoſe Errours or Deceits preached by themſelves; they drew them into their Nets: *Nullo negotio*, as *Paræus* ſpeaks, they were ſoon in a ſhort ſpace of time, and with little difficulty, on the part of the falſe Teachers, brought to relinquiſh Truth, and embrace Errour.

But to paſs from this Inſtance, let but theſe three things, in the caſe of theſe *Galatians*, be laid together and well weighed, and we may ſee in them, the ſtrange Propenſity of Man, in this his fallen and corrupted State, unto Errour: otherwiſe it would be unaccountable, whence it ſhould be, that

that they ſhould relinquiſh ſuch a glorious Truth, and in the room, and ſtead thereof, embrace ſuch a pernicious Errour, and that notwithſtanding ſo many things, which (even according to Principles of Reaſon) ſhould have obliged them to a conſtant adherence to the Truth, and a reſolute rejection of that Errour; yea, and that this ſhould be ſo ſoon, ſo quickly, and with ſo little difficulty effected by the falſe Teachers; had not their corrupt Doctrine, met with an inward Propenſity unto Errour, it cannot be well ſuppoſed, they would, and that notwithſtanding ſo many Obligations to the contrary, ſo ſoon have embraced it.

2. I ſhall inſtance in the Jews. And they are as ſtrange an Inſtance of Man's tenaciouſneſs of Errour, when once taken up and embraced, as the *Galatians* are of their proneneſs unto it; and readineſs to embrace it inſtead of Truth. Neither can it be ſuppoſed, but that Men being ſo prone unto Errour, they will at leaſt, ordinarily be exceeding tenacious of it, when taken up and embraced by them; ſeeing there are more cauſes of their tenaciouſneſs of Errour, than there are of their proneneſs to it, and readineſs to embrace it. Hence Mens proneneſs to Errour ſo fully appearing in that Inſtance of the *Galatians*, I may, and anſwerably ſhall, with more brevity paſs over the other Inſtances, deſigned more eſpecially to illuſtrate, and ſet forth the ſtrangeneſs of Mens tenaciouſneſs of Errour, when taken up and embraced by them. It is not unworthy our Obſervation, that the Holy Ghoſt ſpeaks of Men, as holding Errour or Deceit in their right Hand,

Iſa.

Iſa. 44. 20. Truth is too often held as in the left Hand, but a Lye in the Right; which implies Mens tenaciouſneſs of it. What we would do moſt ſurely and effectually, we do it with our right Hand: therefore *Deborah* commands *Jael*, that *She put her Hand to the Nails, her right Hand to the Workmens Hammer*, Judg. 5. 26. implying, her purpoſe to make ſure work of it. So it is one of the Royal Titles of God, that *He ſaves with his right Hand, them that truſt in him*, Pſal. 17. 7. He is the Saviour of all Men, yea he ſaves Man and Beaſt, (as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks,) but he ſaves others (ſo to ſpeak) with his left Hand, but he ſaves thoſe that Truſt in him, with his right Hand, *i. e.* he ſaves them effectually. So when the Holy Ghoſt, ſpeaks of Men as having Errour, Deceit, or a Lye, in their right Hand, it ſtrongly implies their tenaciouſneſs of it.

But to come to our Inſtance, and to paſs by the various Errours held by the Jews, as concerning the Perſon, Office, and Works of the *Meſſiah*, *&c.* which how tenaciouſly they have hitherto held, and yet do hold, is obvious unto all that know any thing of them. I ſhall only ſingle out this Errour, *viz.* That they being the Seed of *Abraham*, could not be caſt off from being the People of God, nor diſinherited of the Promiſes made to *Abraham*, with reference to his Seed, without a failure on Gods part, in keeping Covenant, and making good his Promiſes. This was the Errour they had taken up; and how ſtrangely tenacious they hitherto have, and ſtill do hold it!

When this Errour was firſt taken up, and entertained by them, is hard to determine; but it ſeems

ſeems plainly to have prevailed in *Ezekiel*'s time, hence ſay they Ezek. 33. 24. *Abraham was one, and he inherited the Land: but we are many, the Land is given us for Inheritance.* Whether they ſay this, as reflecting upon the Faithfulneſs of God, in ſuffering ſo many of them, to be carried away Captive into *Babylon*, as then there were, or as promiſing to themſelves, who yet were in the Land, a Continuance therein, with the ſpeedy return of thoſe that were carried away, I ſhall not determine: however they ſeem to have reference to that Promiſe, *Gen.* 17. 8. made unto *Abraham* and his Seed: The Gift made by that Promiſe, with others of the ſame Import, they ſeem plainly to have an Eye unto; and having the Land given them, by that Promiſe, they ſuppoſe they could not be diſinherited of it, without a failure on God's part. But whenever this Errour was taken up by them, it ſufficiently appears, by the variety of Endeavours, ſucceſsfully uſed for their Conviction, they were ever after moſt ſtrangely tenacious of it. Which that we may the more plainly ſee, let us conſider, both the Perſons endeavouring their Conviction, as alſo, the Way and Manner how they did endeavour it.

1. For the Perſons endeavouring their Conviction, and theſe were more eſpecially theſe four. 1. The Prophet *Ezekiel*. 2. *John Baptiſt*. 3. Our Lord Chriſt. 4. The Apoſtle *Paul*. Now both *Ezekiel*, and *John Baptiſt*, the former by all of them univerſally, the latter by the major part of them, were acknowledged to be Prophets ſent from God. Hence *Ezekiel*'s Prophecy was put, and always hath been, and ſtill is, by the Jews as well

well as Chriſtians, in the Reckoning among thoſe Books, or Writings, that are of Divine Inſpiration. And as for *John Baptiſt*, when our Lord Chriſt demands of the Chief Prieſts and Elders, Whether his Baptiſm was from Heaven or of Men? they durſt not deny it to be from Heaven; and that for this very Reaſon (as themſelves declare) *Becauſe all Men held* John *as a Prophet*, Mat. 21.25, 26. and probably themſelves were convinced that he was ſo.

And as for both our Lord Chriſt, and the Apoſtle *Paul*, tho they denied the former to be the *Meſſiah*, and the latter to have received his Doctrine from Heaven; yet what Evidence they had of the Truth of both, the Hiſtory of the New Teſtament fully declares. Indeed it may ſeem, that one main reaſon of their denying Jeſus Chriſt to be the *Meſſiah*, and the Apoſtle to have received his Doctrine from Heaven, was their oppoſing, and endeavouring to convince them of that Errour, as appears from that *John* 8. from *ver.* 33. to 46. compared with *Acts* 13. 38, 39, 40, and *ver.* 50. Rather than they would let go this Errour, they would reject both our Lord Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, how plain and convincing ſoever, the Evidence given of the ones being the true *Meſſiah*, and the others being inſpired of God himſelf, was. But

2. For the Way and Manner of their reſpective endeavouring the Jews Conviction of this Errour. They did not indeed all proceed in the ſame Way, and after the ſame Manner; but take what was ſaid by them all in purſuance of this Deſign, and it was ſufficient for their Conviction, had they been

been only Teachers among them, and not either extraordinary Prophets, or immediately ſent from God, and inſpired by him, as they were.

1. For *Ezekiel.* As he only endeavoured to convince them, of the Vanity and Unreaſonableneſs, of expecting the good of Promiſes; in particular, that of *Canaan*, upon the meer account of their Relation to *Abraham*, as his Seed, while themſelves were Apoſtatized from God, ſo far as then they were; ſo he only appeals to their own Reaſon and Conſciences: thus *Ezek.* 33. 25, 26. If you (ſaith he) do thus and thus, ſin thus and thus againſt God, *ſhall ye poſſeſs the Land?* as if he ſhould ſay, be you your ſelves your own Judges; can you imagine, that while you are Apoſtatized from God, and live in Ways of Sin, againſt him, that you ſhould have the Promiſes made good unto you? your own Reaſon and Conſciences (may they be but attended unto) will convince you, of the vanity and unreaſonableneſs of ſuch expectations: and by thus appealing to their own Reaſons, and Conſciences, as to the vanity and unreaſonableneſs of this their expectation, he doth impliciltely aſſert the like vanity and unreaſonableneſs, of their expecting, that God ſhould continue to be their God, and owning them to be his People, in caſe of their total and abſolute Apoſtacy from him. Seeing tho it's poſſible, that the Condition of ſome particular Promiſe may not be performed, as conſequently, the good promiſed, forfeited, when yet the Covenant in the general is not broken; yet if Men, by failing in the Condition of a particular Promiſe, do forfeit the Good promiſed, then by failing in the Condition of the

Covenant, in an abſolute Senſe, they would forfeit their Covenant-Intereſt. So that the Prophet evincing the unreaſonableneſs of their expecting their continued Poſſeſſion of the Land of *Canaan*, while they were Apoſtatized from God; notwithſtanding their Relation unto *Abraham*, doth implicitely evince, the unreaſonableneſs of their expecting, that God ſhould continue to be a God unto them, and own them for his People, and by conſequence, the juſtneſs and reaſonableneſs of their total rejection by God, notwithſtanding their natural deſcent from *Abraham*, in caſe of an abſolute and total Apoſtacy from him. So that, would but the Jews have acted according to the principles of Reaſon, which Nature hath furniſhed them withal, and would they but have attended to the Light of their own Conſciences, this Errour would have been nipped in the very firſt budding of it forth: but notwithſtanding all the Prophet can ſay, yet they hold it faſt. Hence,

2. No ſooner doth *John Baptiſt* enter upon his Miniſtry, but he finds it neceſſary, again, to endeavour their conviction of the ſame Errour: and both *John Baptiſt*, our Lord Chriſt, and the Apoſtle *Paul*, ariſe higher, and endeavour to convince them of the unreaſonableneſs of their expecting that God ſhould continue to be their God, and to own them as his People; and conſequently, the juſtneſs of their rejection by God, in caſe of their total Apoſtacy from, and rejection of him, as they would do, and did, by their rejecting of Jeſus Chriſt. And as for *John Baptiſt*, as he only implicitely aſſerts, that in caſe of their rejection of Jeſus Chriſt the true *Meſſiah*, then ready to be revealed; and continuing

tinuing in their Impenitency, God would caſt them off from being his People, yea would conſume them with the Fire of his Judgments, and at laſt caſt them into everlaſting Burnings; and anſwers an Objection, he foreſaw they would make againſt God's ſo dealing with them: thus, Mat. 3. 9, 10. *Think not to ſay* (ſays John Baptiſt) *within your ſelves, we have* Abraham *to be our Father, &c.* As if he ſhould ſay, your natural Relation unto *Abraham*, as his Seed, will not avail in caſe of your Unbelief and Impenitency: notwithſtanding that Relation, you may, yea, continuing in your Impenitency, you will be rejected of God, and conſumed by his Wrath. Now the Objection that *John* foreſaw they would make, was this, *viz.* That in caſe any were Rejected, then the Promiſe made to *Abraham* would fail. God had promiſed to be a God to him and his Seed in their Generations, and the Covenant wherein this Promiſe is contained, is an everlaſting Covenant, which ſuppoſes that *Abraham* ſhould have a Seed throughout all Generations: now, they ſay within themſelves, in caſe we are caſt off and thus dealt withal, where ſhall *Abraham* have a Seed? And if his Seed fail, the Promiſe muſt alſo neceſſarily fail. Now to this *John* anſwers, That God was able of thoſe very Stones, to raiſe up a Seed unto *Abraham*: *Abraham* ſhould have a Seed, to whom the Promiſes ſhould be made good, though themſelves were rejected and deſtroyed; but notwithſtanding what *John* can ſay, yet they ſtill hold faſt their Deceit. Hence,

3. Our Lord Chriſt himſelf further purſues this Deſign of their Conviction. Now our Lord Chriſt

ſpeaks more home and full to their Conviction, and he not only implies their Rejection by God, ſo as no longer to be accounted either his Servants or Children, but proves the Dueneſs and juſtneſs of that their Rejection, and that by a double Argument: The

1. Is taken from the State they had put themſelves into, *viz.* a State of Servitude. They were but Servants to another Maſter, *viz.* Sin: So he tells them *John* 8. 34. that *Whoſoever committeth Sin, is a Servant of Sin:* and then tells them, in v. 35. *The Servant abideth not in the Houſe for ever, but the Son abideth for ever:* that is only proper to the Son; plainly implying, that they, however naturally deſcended from *Abraham*, yet being now become the Servants of Sin, ſhould (as juſtly they might) be rejected or caſt out of the Houſe, that is, the Church of God: and conſequently, be rejected of him, from being his People. They having caſt off God from being their Maſter, and ſubjected themſelves unto another Maſter, it was but juſt and equal that God ſhould, as now he would, caſt them out of his Houſe, and conſequently, from being his Servants or People.

2. He argues it, from the Relation they put themſelves into, to the Devil, by doing his Works: and hereby, had cut off their Spiritual Relation unto *Abraham* as his Seed; according to the true import and intendment of that term *Seed* in the Covenant. Hence he tells them, ver. 39. *That if they were* Abraham's *Seed*, that is, *his Spiritual Seed, they would do the Works of* Abraham, but that they not doing, they ceaſed to be his Seed or Children. Thus our Lord Chriſt tells them, ver. 44.

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Ye are the Children of the Devil. And how juſt and equal was it, that they having cut off their Relation to *Abraham* as his Seed, and become the Children of the Devil, they ſhould be caſt off by God, from being any longer his People. So that our Lord Chriſt evinces, according to the Principles of Reaſon, the juſtneſs of their Rejection from being the People, Servants or Children of God; notwithſtanding the continuance of their natural Relation to *Abraham*: but yet they hold faſt their former Deceit. Hence

Laſtly, The Apoſtle *Paul* further endeavours their Conviction, and he doth it, by implicitely aſſerting not only a poſſibility that they might be, but that *de facto*, ſome, yea many of them, were actually rejected of God from being his People, and by vindicating the Faithfulneſs of God, in his Covenant and Promiſes, notwithſtanding that their Rejection. He vindicates the Faithfulneſs of God, by diſtinguiſhing of *Abraham*'s Seed, and ſhewing they were either Natural or Spiritual: now he ſhews that all, (tho ſome of *Abraham*'s Natural Seed, *viz.* thoſe that deſcended, immediately, from his Loins, and that in their pure infant State) were under the Covenant, and Promiſes of it as his Seed; yet neither they, when grown up, nor any others in after-Ages, could either for themſelves or theirs, lay any juſt claim thereunto, meerly on the account of their natural deſcent from *Abraham*, without a perſonal Acceptation of the Covenant, and performing the Conditions of it; and thereby becoming his Spiritual Seed. And hence he infers, That God might be, and was faithful to his Covenant

and Promiſes, though they were rejected by him.

And yet there is one thing more, in reſpect of thoſe that have ſurvived their diſperſion by the *Romans*, and that is, God's actual Rejection of them: his actual Rejection of them, is an undeniable Evidence, of the falſity of that Notion, which they had entertained and embraced; but yet notwithſtanding all, they ſtill hold faſt that their Deceit, and will needs ſuppoſe themſelves the only People of God, to this very day.

Now from the whole of what hath been ſaid, we may ſee how ſtrangely tenacious the Jews have been, and ſtill are, of this their Errour, having once taken up and embraced it. They had (beſides others) theſe four ſucceſſively one after the other; the two former of whom, were either univerſally, or by the major part of them, owned and acknowledged to be true Prophets ſent from God; the two latter did abundantly, yea ſuperabundantly, evidence themſelves, the one to be the true *Meſſiah*, the other to be an Apoſtle of his, having received his Doctrine by Divine Revelation, endeavouring their Conviction, and that by appealing to their own Reaſon and Conſcience, by dealing with them in a way of Argument and rational Demonſtration, and by anſwering what Objections they could (with any ſhew of Reaſon) make. And laſt of all, God himſelf confutes this their Errour, by his actual Rejection of them: and yet they hitherto have, and ſtill do hold it faſt, and thereupon refuſe to return: ſo tenacious is Man of Errour when once taken up and embraced by him. But,

3. We

3. We may inſtance in the Church of *Rome*, or thoſe we call Papiſts; and they are a marvellous Inſtance, both of Man's proneneſs to Errour, and of his tenaciouſneſs of it when once taken up and embraced by him. It is needleſs to inſtance in particulars, their ſtrange proneneſs to, and tenaciouſneſs of Errour is ſufficiently known, unto all that have but any acquaintance with the Tenets held by them; what ſome amongſt them have undergone rather than they would relinquiſh them, and what Means have been uſed for their Conviction! Indeed the Tenets embraced and held by them, (eſpecially ſome of them) are not only ſo directly contrary to the Scriptures, but to all Principles of Philoſophy, yea to the common Reaſon and Senſe of Mankind, that their embracement, eſpecially their tenaciouſneſs of them, would be utterly unaccountable, had not the Scriptures before declared that it ſhould be ſo, and reſolved it into the ſeverity of the Divine Wrath, and juſt Judgment of God upon them, giving them up unto *Strong Deluſions, to believe a Lye*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 11. * But let that ſuffice for the firſt thing to be ſpoken unto; namely, That there is a marvellous Proneneſs unto Errour in Man, as now fallen and corrupted, and that having once taken up and embraced it, he is too commonly too tenacious of it.

* *Nullis verbis exprimi poteſt quam portenteſa* (ſpeaking of the Papiſts) *illuc ſic eorum colubes, quam craſſa & pudenda ſit ſuperſtitionum abſurditas, quam aliena a ſenſu communi deliria*, &c. *Vide* Calv. *in loc.*

Secondly, To make ſome enquiry, Whence it ſhould come to paſs that it is ſo: Or what the

Cauſes are that the one or the other of theſe Evils muſt be aſcribed unto. Now for this they muſt be aſcribed to a threefold Cauſe, and a fourth may be added, in eſpecial of the latter of them.

I. It muſt be aſcribed to that Pravity and Corruption contracted and come upon human Nature, through the Fall of our Firſt Parents. That there is a moſt dreadful Pravity and Corruption come upon Human Nature, through the Fall of the firſt Parents of Man kind, and that it is propagated ſucceſſively from Parents to Children throughout all Generations, I ſhall at preſent take for granted. Now (I ſay) that this proneneſs in Men, to take up and entertain Errour inſtead of Truth, and alſo their tenaciouſneſs of it, when taken up and embraced by them, may, and muſt be eminently aſcribed to this Pravity and Corruption of their Natures. And there are three things conſiderable, with reſpect unto Man as thus depraved and corrupted, from whence theſe Evils now mentioned, proceed, and have their Riſe. And the,

1. Is, The Blindneſs and Injudiciouſneſs of the Mind.

2. The Suitableneſs and Agreeableneſs of Errour to the Mind, as thus depraved and corrupted.

3. That ſome particular Luſt is thereby gratified.

1. This twofold Evil (we have been diſcourſing of) proceeds from the Blindneſs and Injudiciouſneſs of the Mind. The Mind being blinded and become injudicious, it is neither able to diſcern Truth, nor to diſtinguiſh betwixt Truth and Errour: and hence, Men often greedily catch at

and

and take up Errour, under an apprehenſion that it is Truth. There are two things yet remaining in all Men, at leaſt, that have not in a more than ordinary way debauched Nature, enclining them to the Truth, as abſolutely conſidered, and ſo far as it is known to be Truth.

1. There is ſomewhat of that Love unto Truth, wherein the Image of God, enſtamped upon Nature at the firſt Creation, did conſiſt.

2. There is a Conſcientiouſneſs of Duty towards God.

Hence, even in reſpect of thoſe in whom Conſcience hath no Intereſt in, or Influence upon their Acts and Actions, they may yet earneſtly catch at, and tenaciouſly hold what they apprehend to be Truth: but through the Darkneſs and Injudiciouſneſs of their Minds, miſtaking Errour for Truth, they may, and uſually do take up, and tenaciouſly hold Errour under an apprehenſion that it is Truth. This ſeems to be the Caſe of the *Sadduces*, *Mat.* 22. 21. But now when Conſcience comes in, and joyns with that natural Love unto Truth, a Man is carried out with more earneſtneſs to embrace and hold faſt Truth: but now, miſtaking Errour for Truth, they embrace and hold faſt that, under an apprehenſion that it is Truth: This ſeems to be the Apoſtle's Caſe, *Acts* 23. 1. *And* Paul *earneſtly beholding the Councel*, *&c.* And the more active and effectual Conſcience is, in the exciting and ſtirring up Men to their Duty, the more earneſtly and greedily do they embrace Errour, and the more tenacious are they of it, when once embraced by them. They now em-

embrace and hold it faſt out of Conſcience, as tho it were really Truth; and hence oftentimes, none are more tenacious of Errour, than weak Believers: And the Reaſon is, Becauſe they hold it both from a renewed Principle of Love to Truth, and alſo out of a Conſcience of their Duty towards God, as ſuppoſing it to be Truth indeed: And when Men, through the Darkneſs of their Underſtandings, miſtake Errour for Truth, it is no wonder though they greedily embrace it; and having embraced it do hold it faſt.

2. Theſe Evils proceed from the Suitableneſs and Agreeableneſs of Errour to the Mind of Man, as corrupted and depraved.

Errour is as natural unto Man fallen, as any other Sin is. Now there is a certain Connaturality and Congeniality, (ſo to ſpeak) between Sin, and the Nature of Man as corrupted. Hence it is, that he is ſaid to *Drink in Iniquity like Water*, Job 15. 16. Eating and Drinking are natural Actions; thus it is as natural for Men as now corrupted, conſidered in their moral Capacities to Sin, as it is to them conſidered in their natural Capacities to Eat and Drink. Hence Man ſins with a like Pleaſure and Delight, as he Eats and Drinks; and this holds true of Errour as well as any other Sin. The Underſtanding of Man ſtands averſe from God, and whatever is from him, *Rom.* 8. 7. and is ſtrongly inclined to whatever bears a contrariety to him. And hence it is, that through the Connaturalneſs of

Occulta quadam innataque proclivitate ad Hæreſes, Schiſmata, mendacia, ac veritatis odium vel deſertionem & neglectionem propendet; (ſcil. Caro noſtra) Sibel *in* Jude.

of Errour unto Men, that it is after a ſort ſweet unto them, even as Truth is to a renewed Mind. Hence Hereſy is reckoned up amongſt the Works of the Fleſh, *Gal.* 5. 20. And hence, as the Apoſtle *James* ſpeaks of Envy, the Fleſh luſteth to it: the like may be ſaid of Errour, the Fleſh luſteth to it. Whence that Combate or Conflict between the Fleſh and the Spirit in regenerate perſons, is between Truth and Errour, as well as between any other Vice, and Vertue or Grace, that lie in a direct Oppoſition one unto the other: And from this Connaturalneſs of Errour unto the Minds of Men, we may obſerve theſe two things.

1. That Man naturally inclines to Errour from the very Womb.

Hence it is expreſſed as one Effect of Original Sin, that all Men are gone aſide, *Pſal.* 14. compared with *Rom.* 3. and that from the very Womb, as the Pſalmiſt tells us, *Pſal.* 58. 3.

Now Men are ſaid to be gone aſide, not only in reſpect of their outward Ways and Actions, but in reſpect of the internal Acts of their Souls; their Underſtandings are gone aſide, or deviated from Truth to Errour, as well as their Wills and Affections are gone aſide, or turned from God unto the World. Hence Errour always anticipates Truth, unleſs prevented by ſupernatural Illuminations, or ſome Inſtructions from without.

2. That the Mind of Man as corrupted naturally, or if left to its own natural Inclination, embraces Errour and rejects Truth *qua talis.*

Quemadmodum Terra, quæ propter peccatum maledicta eſt, multo feracius fert ſpinas & Tribulos, etiam ſine Culturâ, quam Triticum, &c. Sic Terra Carnis noſtræ multo capacior eſt impiæ Doctrinæ, quam piæ, quia natura ſumus impii & mali, &c.

talis. My meaning is not that the Mind doth embrace Errour, or reject Truth as known to be ſo, but it embraceth Errour and rejects Truth, meerly from that Suitableneſs and Agreeableneſs that is between it, as corrupted, and Errour, and the Unſuitableneſs and Diſagreement that is between it and Truth. Hence Men embrace Errours and reject Truth, tho there be no rational inducement ſo to do. That is a remarkable Paſſage of our Lord Chriſt, John 8. 45. *Becauſe I tell you the Truth, ye believe me not.* The very Deſign of our Lord Chriſt, is to ſhew the Reaſon of the Jews rejecting his Doctrine, and that was the unſuitableneſs and unagreeableneſs of it to their corrupted Natures. Hence he tells them in *ver.* 47. that they heard not the Word, becauſe they were not of God; that is, they were not born of God; they were not *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, as *Peter* ſpeaks. There is an unſuitableneſs, yea a contrariety between divine Truth and an unregenerated Nature. Hence, as the Will and Affections reject practical Truth, ſo the Underſtanding rejects ſpeculative Truth, and that meerly becauſe it is Truth; as he ſaid, *Non amo te*, &c. So Men reject Truth, when they can give no reaſon for their ſo doing, only they find their Minds averſe unto it. And from hence it is ſometimes, that the clearer Diſcoveries there are of Truth, the more the Minds of Men are averſe unto, and hardened againſt it.

3. There

3. There is ſome Luſt gratified by Errour. There is hardly any, if any, Errour at all, but the embracement of it is a gratification of ſome Luſt, either of the Fleſh, or of the Mind; as the Apoſtle diſtinguiſhes, *Eph.* 2. 3. Truth lies in a direct Oppoſition to all the Luſts, corrupt Affections, and Paſſions of Men; inſomuch, that in caſe a Man had an exact and perfect Syſtem of Truth in his Underſtanding, there could no Luſt or corrupt Affection ſtir within him, but it would immediately meet with a check from that Light of Truth in the Underſtanding; and were the Underſtanding but throughly ſanctified, and by ſanctifying Grace, with the concurring Efficacy of the Spirit, enabled to guide and rule the whole Man as it ought, and at the firſt Creation was appointed to do, they would thereby be effectually curbed and reſtrained. Hence is that of the Apoſtle, *Eph.* 4. 20, 21. where having in the foregoing Verſe ſpoken of the corrupt Manners of the *Gentiles*, he immediately ſubjoins, *But ye have not ſo learned Chriſt*; that is, you have not either been inſtructed by the Doctrine, or guided by the Practice of Chriſt to lead ſuch Lives as they do; neither the Doctrine nor Example of Chriſt teacheth you to live as they do, fulfilling the Deſires of the Fleſh and of the Mind: no (as if he ſhould ſay) both the Doctrine and Example of Chriſt, inſtruct and guide you to a quite different Life, even a Life of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs. Now mark how he proceeds, *If ſo be ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the Truth is in Jeſus, &c.* that is, if you have ſavingly learned the Truths contained in his Doctrine, and exemplified in his Practice, you will

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not live as do the *Gentiles*; that Light of Truth held forth in the Doctrine, and illuſtrated in the Life and Practice of Jeſus Chriſt, will curb, reſtrain, and effectually keep you from ſuch a Life as they live. Whence it appears, that as the Truth lies in a direct Oppoſition to all the Luſts, Affections and Paſſions, that are found either in the Fleſh or in the Minds of Men; ſo when it is learned and underſtood in a ſaving manner, all thoſe Luſts and corrupt Affections are curbed and reſtrained, that is, they are ſo according to the meaſure and degree in which that Light of Truth is received and ſanctified unto Men.

Hence again is that Petition of our Lord Chriſt, on the behalf of his Diſciples. *Sanctify them through thy Truth:* John 17. 17. Now as the Truth lies in ſuch a direct Oppoſition to the Luſts and Corruptions of Men, ſo there is no Errour but it hath a compliance with ſome Luſt, either in the Fleſh, or in the Mind, and by the embracement of it, that a curb or reſtraint laid upon ſuch a Luſt by the oppoſite Truth, is taken off; and conſequently, that Luſt is gratified: for then is Luſt gratified when the Reſtraints it before lay under, from the Light of Truth in the Underſtanding, are taken off, and it acts freely without any controul from Conſcience.

To clear up this only in two Inſtances.

1. Let us ſee it in that Errour entertained and taken up by the *Galatians*. What it was, we have already ſeen: Now, that Errour had an apt compliance with that Luſt of Pride, connatural unto all Men, as corrupted and depraved through the Fall. Man naturally, through the Pride of his Heart,

Heart, would fain be his own Saviour; at leaſt would have a joint Intereſt with Chriſt, in purchaſing and procuring his own Juſtification and Salvation. He would have ſomewhat to glory in, and boaſt of; now, that Errour did comply with that Luſt connatural unto all Men: and from hence it was, that the *Galatians* did ſo readily fall in with it and embrace it.

2. Let us ſee it in that Errour taken up and ſo tenaciouſly held by the Jews. Theirs was an Errour that had a compliance with all Luſt, or with Luſt in the general. They ſuppoſing themſelves as the Seed of *Abraham*, ſecure as to their Covenant-State, and the enjoyment of the good of Promiſes, can now indulge themſelves in the fulfilling of their Luſts without controul. And thus, ſhould we go over all manner of Errours, we might eaſily diſcover a compliance they have, in one reſpect or another, with one Luſt or another; and from this Compliance that Errour hath with Luſt, and the Gratification that it receives therefrom, it is that Men are ſo prone to entertain, and having entertained, are ſo tenacious of Errour. And from the whole we may infer, that as unregenerate Perſons are more prone to Errour, and having embraced it, are more tenacious of it than the Regenerate; ſo the leſs the Natures of any that are Regenerate or Sanctified, the more Corruption prevails, the more prone they are to embrace Errour, and the more tenacious are they of it, when once embraced by them. Hence we ſhall find in Scriptures that as to eſpecially the more groſs and dangerous Errours or Hereſies, they uſually have been taken up and embraced, either by Men of cor-

corrupt Minds (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) or elſe by very weak Chriſtians, ſuch as have little Grace, but much Corruption abounding in them. Hence, as thoſe Seducers mentioned, in 2 *Tim.* 2. 16, 17, 18. and again, in *Chap.* 3. 6. are implied to be ſuch as have a *Form of Godlineſs, but deny the Power of it*; ſo the Perſons by them ſeduced, are peculiarly ſaid to be *ſilly Women laden with Luſts*; 2 *Tim.* 3. 5, 6, 7. And hence, our Lord Chriſt gives it as a Character of falſe Teachers, *that they bring forth evil Fruit*, they are Men of corrupt Hearts, and their Actions are anſwerable, *Mat.* 7. 15. or elſe, they are very weak, tho ſincere Chriſtians; ſo it was with the *Galatians*. Hence, the Apoſtle writes to them as little Children; *Tenuitatem fidei denotat.* Tho they ſeemed to be grown Chriſtians, yet they were but little Children, weak in Grace, but having their Corruptions ſtrong in them. But let that ſuffice for the firſt Cauſe of this two-fold Evil, we have hitherto diſcourſed of, that is found amongſt Men.

II. Man's proneneſs to, and tenaciouſneſs of Errour, muſt be in part aſcribed unto Satan. Satan hath no little Intereſt in all the Errours, Deceits, and Falſhoods found among Men. The Deception of the World by the Antichriſtian Errours and Deceits, is eminently aſcribed unto him, *Rev.* 12. 9. He is ſaid there to deceive the Nations: he invents Errours (ſo to ſpeak) and then infuſes them into the Minds of Men.

Men ſometimes applaud themſelves, when they have, as they may poſſibly ſuppoſe, found out any new Doctrine or Tenet, any Notion that differs from the common Sentiments of Profeſſours, and they

they think they have diſcovered a Truth that was before hid from others: hereupon they hug it, as tho it were the Fruit of their own Sagacity, piercing Underſtandings, or peculiar Diligence and Induſtry, when alas it's only a Brat of Satan's begetting in their Fancies, and ſubtilly conveyed to their Underſtandings.

Satan is the great Promoter of Errour among Men, and he is not only the Promoter of it amongſt Men of corrupt Minds, (who are the proper ſubjects of his own Kingdom) but he is the great Promoter of it even amongſt Saints themſelves. Hence the Apoſtle *Paul* was ſo jealous of the *Corinthians*, 2 *Cor.* 11. 3. I fear (ſaith he) leſt as the Serpent, that is Satan, beguiled *Eve*, ſo your Minds, *viz.* through the ſame ſubtilty of this Serpent, *ſhould be corrupted from the Simplicity that is in Chriſt*. And hence, our Watch againſt Satan ought to be exerciſed with reſpect unto Errours, as well as to any other Evils whatſoever, he ſtill endeavouring to corrupt the Minds of the Saints themſelves from the Simplicity that is in Chriſt. And not to inſiſt upon the Power that Satan hath to deceive the Minds of Men, I ſhall only intimate ſome few Reaſons, why Satan is ſo induſtrious to promote Errours among Men, eſpecially among Saints. And,

1. It is becauſe of that Love he bears to, and that Pleaſure he takes in Errour, as it is agreeable to his own degenerated and corrupted Nature. Satan is the moſt degenerated and depraved of all Creatures, there is nothing of Moral Good in him; no Truth in his Underſtanding, no Moral Vertue in his Will; ſo our Lord Chriſt tells the Jews, he

hath no Truth in him, *John* 8. 44. And hence, he bears the greateſt Enmity unto, and hath an irreconcileable Antipathy againſt Truth, as well as againſt Moral Good: and on the other hand, hath a love unto, and takes pleaſure in Errour, Deceit and Falſhood. As ſome Men are ſaid to Love and to *make a Lye*, *Rev.* 22. 15. it ſeems to be meant principally of Errour. Now if Men may degenerate ſo far as to love a Lye, the like is true, and that in a higher Degree, of Satan, he loves a Lye: hence he is ſaid to be the Father of a Lye, in the place before mentioned: whence he is ſtill ſuggeſting Errour and Deceit to the Minds of Men, and that meerly from that Love he bears to, and Pleaſure he takes therein. As it is ſaid of God, he is the *Father of Mercy*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 3. He ſheweth Mercy from his own native Inclination and Propenſity thereunto, tho there be no other Motive but the Miſery of the Creature; ſo Satan is the *Father of a Lye*, he promotes it among Men from his meer love to and pleaſure in it.

2. It is becauſe he takes Pleaſure and Delight in deceiving and deluding Men. And this Pleaſure and Delight eminently ariſeth from the Gratification of his own Luſts thereby; for Satan hath his Luſts as well as Men, *John* 8. 44. and theſe Luſts are gratified by his deceiving and deluding of Men: As for Inſtance;

1. In that Luſt of Pride. Satan is the proudeſt of all Creatures, and he is eminently proud of his intellectual Endowments. Hence he accounts it his Glory, and prides himſelf in over-reaching and deluding Men, and the wiſer any are, the more doth Satan endeavour to deceive

deceive them, the more he prides himſelf in deceiving them. And hence in ſome Senſe, it is a greater Pleaſure and Delight to Satan, to delude and deceive Saints, then to deceive and delude others, becauſe they have a higher Degree of Wiſdom than others have, and conſequently, he accounts it a greater Glory to deceive them than others.

2. There is his love of Soveraignty and Dominion. He would be a God, would have an univerſal Dominion over all Men, and by deluding and deceiving them, he conquers and ſubdues them to himſelf, at leaſt ſo far as they are deceived by him, and it is more Pleaſure to him to conquer Men by Deceit, than by meer Force: as Men proud of their Wit or Policy, take more Pleaſure in conquering their Enemies by their Wiles and Stratagems, than by open Force; ſo it is with Satan. Hereby, he doth not only gratifie that Luſt of love to Soveraignty and Dominion, but alſo that Luſt of Pride: he gratifies a double Luſt thereby. I might Inſtance in his Malice, Revenge, and the like, but I ſhall contract.

3. It is from his Enmity againſt God. Satan acts in a way of the greateſt Enmity againſt God that it is poſſible for a Creature to do, and he knows that Errour and Deceit in the Minds of Men, is highly diſpleaſing and hateful unto him: on what account it is ſo, may be ſhown afterwards: at preſent I only ſay, Satan knows that it is ſo. Hence out of meer Enmity unto him, were there no other Motive inducing him thereunto, he would endeavour to promote Errour to the utmoſt of his Power among Men.

4. It is from his deſire more and more to corrupt, deprave and viciate the Natures of Men: and he knows Errour doth ſo.

Laſtly, It is becauſe Errour diſpoſes Men to Sin. And it doth ſo three ways.

1. By defiling and depraving their Natures. We may ſuppoſe that our firſt Parents entertaining that Errour, *viz.* That, eating of the forbidden Fruit, they ſhould be like unto God, knowing Good and Evil, had their Natures corrupted, and thereby become diſpoſed to the actual tranſgreſſion of that Prohibition.

2. According to the Nature and Quality of the Errour, it takes off that Reſtraint that the Light of the oppoſite Truth laid upon the Luſts, corrupt Affections, and Paſſions of Men.

3. Errour it ſelf leads and carries out Men to Sin. Men through the Errour of their Underſtandings, often think that to be lawful, poſſibly a Duty, which indeed is a Sin; yea a very great and heinous Sin: as in *Paul's* Caſe before his Converſion, *Acts* 26. 9. See alſo *John* 16. 2. So ſometimes they think that is ſinful, which is not only lawful, but an important Duty. *Peter* before he was inſtructed by that Viſion, ſeems to have thought it to have been unlawful to go into, or converſe with the *Gentiles*, tho to preach the Goſpel to them; ſo *Acts* 28. Hence the Jews forbid the Apoſtles to preach the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, *that they might be ſaved*, 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 16. Men often, through ſome Errour, ſin out of Conſcience. Conſcience it ſelf, through the Errour of the Underſtanding, becomes a Patron of Sin, and that both of Omiſſion and Commiſſion.

4. Er-

4. Errour ſometimes provokes God to give up Men to the Luſts of their own Hearts, and to the Power of Satan; all thoſe Evils and Abominations found amongſt the *Gentiles*, are ſaid to be *a juſt recompence of their Errour*, *Rom.* 1. 27. Now Satan endeavouring with all his might, to promote Sin amongſt Men (his Kingdom conſiſting therein) endeavours to promote Errour, as ſubſervient and introductory thereunto. Theſe are ſome of the Reaſons why Satan ſo induſtriouſly endeavours to promote Errour amongſt Men, and from that advantage he has againſt Men, yea, good Men, partly through that acceſs he has as a Spiritual Being to their Souls, and partly, through that Darkneſs, Corruption, and natural proneneſs unto Errour he finds in them, he too often prevails. From whence Men, yea good Men, more eaſily entertain, and more tenaciouſly hold Errour than they would do, from the meer Pravity and Corruption of their own Natures. But,

III. Many Men's Proneneſs to, and anſwerably, their actual embracement and tenaciouſneſs of Errour, may, and muſt be aſcribed to the Wrath and Diſpleaſure of God againſt them; Errours are often ſore Judgments, they are the Effects of the Wrath and Diſpleaſure of God againſt Men: there are, its true, variety of Errours, Miſtakes, and Miſapprehenſions diſſonant from, and contrary to that Syſtem of Truth contained in the Scriptures, found with the beſt of Men, which are conſiſtent with the ſpecial Love and Favour of God, but for more groſs Errours, there is uſually a peculiar hand of God in them: they are ordinarily the Effects of his Diſpleaſure, if not vindictive Wrath againſt

Men. And I fear it will at laſt be found, that many of thoſe Errours taken up, and embraced by Profeſſors in this Age, which poſſibly may be made but light of, and reckoned amongſt the Infirmities of Saints, will yet be found the dreadful Effects of Divine Diſpleaſure, if not vindictive Wrath; and tho it is certain, God never gives his own People up to Errour, as an Effect of his vindictive Wrath and Juſtice, yet he may do it as an Effect of his ſore Diſpleaſure: God may puniſh Sin with Sin, and conſequently, Sin with Errour, in his own People. Hence Men, yea let me ſay, good Men, may take their embracement of ſuch a Doctrine, or Tenet, and their taking up and walking in ſuch a Practice, as an Effect of the ſpecial Love and Favour of God to them, they may think he hath favoured them with the knowledg of that Truth which is hid from others, when as what they conceit Truth, may be a very groſs Errour; and conſequently, their embracement of it, may be an Effect of the Anger or Diſpleaſure of God againſt them: the Conſideration whereof, ſhould cauſe us to walk with a holy Fear and Trembling, and excite to a more full and diligent Enquiry, Whether we have not embraced Errour inſtead of Truth. This is certain, Errour is frequently an Effect of Divine Wrath and Diſpleaſure: The Apoſtle expreſly reſolves the Errours in the Antichriſtian Kingdom unto this Cauſe, in that forecited 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 11. and when there is the ſuperaddition of this Cauſe to the two former, when there is not only the Pravity of Man's own Nature, and the ordinary Energy or working of Satan, but the Wrath or Diſpleaſure of God is

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out againſt Men, and that expreſſed this way, *viz.* with reference to their embracement and holding of Errour, it muſt neceſſarily be that they will be ſtrongly inclined to, and ſtrangely tenacious of it, when embraced by them. Hence it is, that all manner of Errours do ſo abound in, and are ſo tenaciouſly held by the Subjects of that Kingdom: *God*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *ſhall ſend them ſtrong Deluſions*, the Greek is, πέμψει αὐτοῖς ἐνέργειαν πλάνης, which may be tranſlated two ways, either God ſhall put into them the Efficacy of Errour, πέμψει for παρεμπέμψει, and then we are to take Errour ſubjectively, for that natural Inclination and Propenſity unto Errour, contracted by the Fall; and the meaning is, God ſhall put into them an erroneous Inclination, that hath an Efficacy in it, or he ſhall put an Efficacy into that *erroneous* Inclination, connatural unto Men. Or, 2. God ſhall ſend unto them the Efficacy of *Errour*; that is, effectual *Errour*, and ſo we are to take *Errour* objectively, *viz.* for any falſe Doctrine, or corrupt Tenet, whether reſpecting matters of Faith, or matters of Practice; God ſhall ſend unto them *Errour*, cloathed with an Efficacy, to the captivating their Minds, to the embracement and tenacious holding of it. But it may be urged, How can it be ſaid that God puts into, or ſends unto Men the Efficacy of *Errour*? To that in brief, I anſwer, It implies four things.

1. God's withdrawment of that common concourſe of his Spirit, vouchſafed ordinarily unto Men, whereby there is a Reſtraint laid upon that corrupt Inclination unto *Errour*, then it doth not work ſo effectually as otherwiſe it would do. And,

2. Hereupon Men are left to the full energy or workings of that corrupt Inclination; that corrupt Inclination exerts, and puts forth it ſelf, according to the degree in which that forementioned Reſtraint is taken off. And this corrupt Inclination expreſſeth it ſelf two ways.

1. In an inward Deſire after, or Appetite (ſo to ſpeak) unto *Errour*, before it be ſuggeſted or preſented to the Mind. This the Apoſtle expreſſeth by a metaphorical Term, κνηθόμενοι, *Itching*, 2 Tim.4.3. *The time ſhall come*, ſaith he, *when Men ſhall have itching Ears*; the meaning is, Men ſhall have a ſtrong Inclination to, or Deſire after new Doctrine, or after corrupt and unſound Doctrines, that may pleaſe and gratify their Luſts.

2. This corrupt Inclination, when, and ſo far as that forementioned Reſtraint is taken off, expreſſeth it ſelf in an eager or greedy catching at, and embracement of *Errour*, when ſuggeſted or preſented unto the Mind; whence, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the *Gentiles*, being left of God, *They gave up themſelves to Laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs*, Eph.4.18,19. So when God takes off the common Reſtraint of his Spirit, from that corrupt Inclination unto *Errour*, that is ſeated in the Underſtandings of Men, will work with a mighty Efficacy, ſo as that Men are carried out to the embracement of it with greedineſs, and having embraced will hold it faſt.

3. That God doth ſo order and diſpoſe of things in a providential way, as that *Errour* or falſe Doctrines ſhall be brought unto Men. *There muſt be Errour*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that the ſound may be made manifeſt.*

4. And

4. And Laſtly, God gives them up to Satan, and Satan works to the furtherance and promotion of Men's embracement and tenacious holding of *Errour*, two ways.

1. By working upon that corrupt Inclination, and Propenſity in the Underſtanding unto *Errour*, and hereby Men given up unto the Power of Satan come to have, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *a Spirit of Errour:* as the Spirit of God infuſeth into Believers, *a Spirit of Truth*; ſo Satan infuſeth into Men *a Spirit of Errour*. Hence we read of *a Spirit of Errour*, and *a Spirit of Truth*, 1 John 4. 6. Every Man is actuated beyond the ordinary working of his own natural Inclinations, whether in a gracious or ſinful way, by a ſupernatural Agent; Believers are actuated by the Spirit of God, wicked Men by Satan.

2. Satan concurs and joins in with *Errour*, when externally preſented to the Mind; whereby it comes to have a mighty Efficacy in it, to the captivating Men to the embracement of it: as it is ſaid of the Word of God, 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 13. where, we have the ſame Words uſed in that Verb; *it worketh effectually in them that believe.* When the Word of God is accompanied and cloathed with the Power of the Spirit, it has a mighty Efficacy in it (and that as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.) *To the pulling down of ſtrong Holds: caſting down Imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth it ſelf againſt the knowledg of God, and to the bringing into Captivity every thought in obedience unto Chriſt.* So when *Errour*, or any falſe Doctrine is accompanied and cloathed with the Power of Satan, it hath a mighty Efficacy in it, even to the pulling

pulling down ſtrong holds, or whatever riſeth up in the Soul in oppoſition to it, and to the captivating the Underſtandings of Men, to the embracement of it. Now, when there is the concurrence of theſe four things, then God may be ſaid, to have put into Men the Efficacy of *Errour*, or ſent unto Men effectual *Errour*; only this may be added as a Cloſe, that God may, and does put into, or ſend unto Men the Efficacy of *Errour*, or effectual *Errour* in various degrees; but in reſpect of the Subjects of the Antichriſtian Kingdom, or the Favourers of, and Adherers to the Man of Sin, God has put into, or ſent unto them the Efficacy of *Errour*, or effectual *Errour*, if not in the higheſt degree, ſimply, and abſolutely poſſible, yet in a very high degree, he hath *ſent them ſtrong Deluſions*; ſo that in reſpect of them, there is the concurrence of all theſe Caſes, and that working at a very high rate, they have the ſame Pravity of Nature in common with all Men. Satan endeavours to promote *Errour* among them, and as an addition unto all, *God has ſent unto them ſtrong Deluſions*: he hath in a very great meaſure, withdrawn that common concourſe of his Spirit, which is ordinarily vouchſafed unto other Men; whereupon that natural Propenſity unto *Errour*, deeply rooted in Human Nature, exerts it ſelf with great force and violence, they are given up in a very great meaſure unto Satan's Power, *The Coming*, and we may add, the Continuance of the Man of Sin, is ſaid to be, *according to the working*, κατ' ἐνέργειαν τῦ σατανᾶ, *the effectual working of Satan.* Satan has a very great Power over all wicked Men. The ſame Word is uſed to ſet forth his working in them, that is

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uſed to ſet forth the working of the Spirit of God in Believers; but of all Men, Satan has a peculiar Power over the Men of that Combination; and anſwerably, works at a very ſtrange rate of Efficacy in them, they want not Men to divulge *Errours* amongſt them, they are given up to Satan, to concur with *Errour*, and heighten its Efficacy, and that from the ſeverity of Divine Wrath againſt them. And from all it is, that ſuch abſurd, ridiculous, and damnable *Errours*, are taken up and tenaciouſly held by them. And according, as there is a Concurrence of theſe three Cauſes, Men do, and will have a Propenſity, eagerly to catch at, and embrace *Errour*, and having embraced it, will tenaciouſly hold it. And hence as ſtrange, abſurd and damnable *Errours*, and Hereſies are taken up, and held with a like ſtrange tenaciouſneſs, by ſome, who yet ſtile themſelves Proteſtants, as thoſe taken up and held in the Antichriſtian Kingdom. Yea, I may add, that from the ſame Cauſes, tho working in a lower way, ſometimes very ſtrange and palpable *Errours*, tho not damnable Hereſies, are embraced, and held with an unrecountable tenaciouſneſs by thoſe, concerning whom there is ground of hope, they ſhall only loſe their work, through the revelation made of it, by that Fire by which themſelves ſhall be ſaved; but let that ſuffice for the three Cauſes, whereunto both Men's proneneſs to, and tenaciouſneſs of *Errour*, may, and muſt be in common aſcribed.

But Fourthly. There is yet another Cauſe that may be aſſigned, in ſpecial, of Men's tenaciouſneſs of *Errour*, when once taken up and embraced

ced by them, and that is, carnal or corrupted Self-Love. This Self-Love is the Cauſe and Root of all Evils, and this is an Evil, incident not only to unregenerate Perſons, but to Saints themſelves; yea, there is too much of it in the beſt of Saints; tho there be a true Love to God, yet Self-Love ſo prevails, as that Love to God is much weakened thereby; tho they love God ſincerely, yet they may love him too little, and themſelves too much; and this Self-Love is over and above the three former, the great Cauſe of Men's tenaciouſneſs of *Errour*, when taken up and embraced by them. And if it be ſaid, How doth this carnal and corrupt Self-Love work towards Men's tenacious holding of *Errour*, when taken up and embraced by them?

Cauſa & radix omnium malorum. Muſc.

1. I anſwer; Self-Love cauſes Men to over-value, and over-ween themſelves, and in particular their own Underſtandings and Judgments. A deep and piercing Underſtanding, and a clear and ſound Judgment have an excellency in them, and are ornamental to Human Nature. Now, Self-Love expreſſeth it ſelf, in Men's wiſhing well to themſelves. Hence every one would have, at leaſt would appear to have, what they apprehend an excellency in, and to be ornamental unto them; and, *quod volumus facile credimus.* Hence, from the exceſs of Self-Love, Men are eaſily brought to perſuade themſelves, that that is true of them, which they would have, at leaſt would have appear to be true of them; and anſwerably, apprehending an Excellency and Glory in ſuch an Under-

derſtanding and Judgment, they eaſily perſuade themſelves their own are ſuch; and hereupon do overvalue themſelves. Self-Love, as one ſpeaks, is a multiplying and magnifying-Glaſs, it repreſents Men to themſelves double to what they are in reality and Truth; Hence, a bad Glaſs for Men to look on themſelves in, yet it is too common for Men to look upon themſelves in this Glaſs: Hence they conceit they have clearer and more piercing Underſtandings and Judgments than indeed they have: and thereupon, conceit themſelves not liable to thoſe Miſtakes, Miſapprehenſions, or falſe Reaſonings that other Men are ſubject unto; and conſequently, ſuſpect not themſelves to have a Lye in their right Hand, when yet indeed they have. *Lean not to thine own Underſtanding*, ſaith *Solomon*, implying a proneneſs in Men to do it, and that ſuppoſes an over value that Men have for their own Underſtandings; were they ſenſible, and apprehenſive of the Shallowneſs, Darkneſs, and Deceiveableneſs of their Underſtandings, they would not lean unto them; but when Men overvalue their Underſtandings and Judgments, they lean to them, as ſufficient to guide them into Truth, and ſecure them from Errour and Deceit: and no wonder, tho Men are very tenacious of *Errour* when they have embraced it, who ſuppoſe themſelves above the danger of it, at leaſt, in leſs danger than ordinarily Men are.

2. Self-Love cauſes men to conceit themſelves higher in the Love & Favour of God, than indeed they are. Men are apt to think the Love of God unto them, muſt bear a proportion to the value they have for themſelves; and hence conceit themſelves

ſelves to be peculiarly priviledged with the Knowledg of Truth, and that God from that Love he bears to them, will ſecure them from *Errour*. It was not from *Haman*'s Deſert, ſo much as from his Self-Love, that he flatters himſelf with a conceit of being *Ahaſuerus* his Favourite; and conſequently, the only Man whom *he delighted to honour*. Self-Love often cauſes Men, to think they are higher in the Love of Men, than indeed they are; and anſwerably, they are apt to over-rate the Love of God to them, and ſuppoſe themſelves to be as high in his Love, as they ſuppoſe themſelves to be in the Love of Men; not but that there are ſome, who are eſpecial Favourites of God: and anſwerably, are priviledged with a ſpecial Knowledg of Truth, and ſecured from, at leaſt, any groſs *Errours*, but many meerly through Self-Love arrogate this to themſelves, when they have no juſt ground ſo to do. Hence ſuſpect not themſelves of thoſe Errours they have indeed taken up and embraced.

3. Self-Love begets in Men an unwillingneſs to take notice of, and blinds their Minds, that they do not ſee their own Defects, Weakneſſes, and Imperfections: The old Proverb is, *Ubi amor ibi nulla deformitas*. And by how much the ſtronger Love is, by ſo much the more unwilling Men are to take notice of; the more effectually are their Minds blinded by it, that they neither do, nor can ſee any Deformity in its Object. It is to admiration, how the exceſſive Love of ſome Parents to their Children, will blind their Eyes, that they ſee not thoſe Evils and Miſcarriages in them, which are obvious and plain to all others! Now,

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as a Man is neareſt to himſelf, ſo Love ordinarily worketh moſt ſtrongly towards himſelf. Hence their Self-Love blinds their Minds, that they ſee not their own Evils, but flatter themſelves as tho Innocent, when yet all others cannot but greatly condemn them: See *Pſal.* 36. 2. Hence it ſeems to be, that *David* himſelf ſaw not his Evils in the Murther of *Uriah*, and committing Adultery with *Bathſheba*, and after taking her to be his Wife; and therefore, *Nathan* endeavours his Conviction, by repreſenting his Caſe in another Man's, where Self Love could have no influence upon him, to blind his Mind, 2 *Sam.* 12. beginning. Thus, in point of *Errour*, Men through the exceſs of Self-Love, neither are willing to, nor do ſee, either the defects of their own Underſtandings, nor the Miſtakes, Errours and falſe Reaſonings, they have taken up and are ſeduced by: And hence, having once taken up *Errour* inſtead of *Truth*, are ſo tenacious of it.

4. Self-Love oppoſes Men, in owning and acknowledging themſelves under any Guilt, whether of Errour it ſelf, or any other Sin, as the effect of it; how hard is it to convince Men, that are under the prevalency of Self Love, that they are under any Guilt, through the prevalency of Self-Love? Men are willing to perſuade themſelves all is well between God and them, and thereupon to ſpeak Peace to themſelves; they have more Charity for themſelves, than to ſuppoſe themſelves Guilty; and beſides, were they Guilty, they muſt own the diſpleaſure of God out againſt them, and that they are in danger of Judgments and Chaſtiſe-

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ments from him; but this they are unwilling ſhould be, and therefore are willing to perſuade themſelves that it is not; and yet further, ſuppoſe they are Guilty, they muſt apply themſelves to thoſe hard and unpleaſing Works of Repentance, and Self-Humiliation, which they are unwilling to do; and hence would fain have all things well with them at preſent. And hereupon, tho they have taken up and embraced *Errour*, yet they are ſo hardly convinced of it; grant but ſuch a Doctrine or Tenet which they have eſpouſed, to be an *Errour*, they muſt have lower thoughts of themſelves than they have, or are willing to have.

5. And Laſtly; Self-Love makes Men unwilling to be taken notice of, or known by others to be in an *Errour*; they think it will reflect on them, and redound to their Shame; and how unwilling are Men, through this ſame Self-Love, to bear the ſhame of having taken up, and entertained *Errour* inſtead of *Truth*, tho to recede from *Errour*, would more redound to their Honour, than the embracement of it redounds to their Diſhonour? To err is Humane, willingly to perſiſt in *Errour* is Diabolical; to acknowledg, and relinquiſh *Errour* upon due Conviction, is truly Chriſtian; and how much better is it for, and how much greater an Honour to a Man, by a free owning and relinquiſhing of an *Errour*, to approve himſelf a true Chriſtian; than by a wilful perſiſting therein, for the concealing his Frailties and Infirmities, as a Man, to gain the repute of Devilliſh? But to put a Cloſe to this, and having declared the marvellous proneneſs of Man, as in this fallen and corrupted Eſtate unto *Errour*, and his uſual tenaciouſneſs

neſs of it when embraced, with the Cauſes of the one and the other.

I ſhall now, according to aſſiſtance given, make ſome Improvement of what hath been ſaid. There is, it is true, another Doctrine obvious in our Text, but that I ſhall take in, in the Application. Several Uſes might be made, to point at ſome few of them.

1. Hence we may infer, That there is no juſt Reaſon, why any ſhould ſtumble or be offended at the Chriſtian Doctrine, or at Religion, on the account of the variety of *Errours* and *Hereſies* found among the Profeſſours of it; thoſe *Errours* and *Hereſies* proceed not from the Doctrine it ſelf. Truth is uniform and conſonant to it ſelf, nor is there any reaſon, why any ſhould impute the abounding of *Errours* and *Hereſies* among Chriſtians, to the Scriptures themſelves, as tho either they were defective in the Revelations of Truth, or did by their Darkneſs render the Knowledg of it unattainable by any. There is a full Revelation of Truth made in them, and the Knowledg of Truth, as contained in them, is plain to him that underſtandeth. Neither do thoſe *Errours* and *Hereſies* proceed from any influence, the Doctrine of Chriſtianity hath upon the Minds of Men; but they proceed from the Pravity of Man's Nature, from Satan, and the juſt Wrath and Diſpleaſure of God againſt Men. Now there are too many that take up a Profeſſion of Religion, that are wholly Fleſh, in an unregenerate Eſtate; and alas! there is too much Fleſh, too much of that Corruption and Pravity of Nature, contracted by the Fall, yet remaining in thoſe that are Regenerate; and as for thoſe that

are wholly Unregenerate, they are ſubject to Satan, he worketh effectually in them; and as for thoſe that are Regenerate, Satan has yet too much Power over them, and too many advantages againſt them; and beſides, God is often provoked by Men to ſend them ſtrong Deluſions. The abounding of *Errours* and *Hereſies* in theſe Lands, wherein we dwell, is none of the leaſt Evidences of the Wrath and Diſpleaſure of God againſt them, and Profeſſours in them; and from all, it is no wonder that *Errours* and *Hereſies* do ſo much abound: It is to be aſcribed to the Grace and Goodneſs of God, that they abound no more. Let but *Errours* and *Hereſies* be reſolved into, and aſſigned unto their true and proper Cauſes, and they will be found to be no juſt ground of ſtumbling unto any, at the Doctrine of Chriſt, or at Religion profeſſed by Chriſtians.

2. Hence we may learn, how unmeet and unfit Man, as in himſelf, is to be entruſted with Truth, in the holding of it forth unto others; and yet that is a Truſt God has repoſed in his Church, and conſequently in every Member thereof, according to their different Stations and Capacity therein. Hence the Church is ſaid to be *the Pillar and Ground of Truth*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. and hereby God doth greatly magnify his Church and People: but Men, no not the beſt of Men, are to be truſted, as abſolutely conſidered in themſelves; and therefore, God hath conſtituted Jeſus Chriſt the Head, Shepherd, and Biſhop of his Church; hath entruſted Truth firſtly in his Hand: and it highly concerns all Chriſtians to walk humbly with, and in a continual holy dependance on him, to be by

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him, led into, and preſerved in all Truth, that ſo they may hold it forth unto others; otherwiſe they will fail in the diſchargeof their Truſt; they will take up and hold faſt Errour inſtead of Truth.

3. Hence we may infer the neceſſity that Man, as in this fallen and depraved Eſtate, lyeth under ſome extrinſecal Means, whereby he may come to the knowledg of, be guided into, and preſerved in the Truth. It muſt be by ſome Revelation either mediately or immediately from God, that Men muſt come to the knowledg of Truth. Man, if left to himſelf, not only his natural Inclination unto Errour, but the weakneſs and ſhallowneſs of his own Underſtanding, will neceſſarily ſubject him to variety of Miſtakes and Errours; and that in and about thoſe Things, the knowledg of which is indiſpenſably neceſſary to Happineſs and Bleſſedneſs. Man's own Underſtanding is no ſafe Guide for him to follow, in the concerns of his Soul and Eternity; it will certainly miſlead him: therefore is that Caution given us by the wiſeſt of Men, and he guided by the Spirit of the All-wiſe God, *Lean not to thine own Underſtanding*, Prov. 3. 5. Thoſe that are led by the meer Light of their own Underſtandings, (as thoſe who pretend to a Light within, in oppoſition to the Light of the Scriptures, or that which is inſtrumentally communicated by them, at beſt are) will infallibly be led into the Pit, even the Pit of everlaſting Deſtruction. It is only the *Light and Truth*, that is the true Light of God, that Light contained in, and communicated by the Scriptures, that can infallibly lead any of the Sons and Daughters of

fallen *Adam* into his holy Hill, (*ſcil.*) Heaven; *Pſal.* 43. 4.

4. Hence we may infer the Goodneſs of God to fallen Man; in particular to our ſelves: And as the Goodneſs of God is variouſly expreſſed; ſo eminently in the Proviſion he hath made for our Guidance into, and Eſtabliſhment in the Truth, and Preſervation from Error. What Proviſion God hath made, with the Fulneſs and Sufficiency thereof, ſhall be taken notice of in the cloſe of this Diſcourſe. At preſent I ſhall only ſay, that that marvelous proneneſs unto Errors, that is connatural unto all, Saints themſelves, ſo far as unrenewed, not excepted, with the ſtrange Influence that it hath on the minds of Men, when once imbraced, ſhould greatly raiſe our Eſteem of that Proviſion made, fill our Hearts with admiration at the Goodneſs of God expreſſed therein, and be matter of continual Praiſe, and Thankſgivings unto him: *Praiſe ye the Lord, Oh Jeruſalem! praiſe thy God, Oh Zion!* ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſ.* 147. 12. and the principal benefit he inſtances in, as calling for Praiſe, is this, *He ſheweth his Word unto* Jacob, *and his Statutes and Judgments unto Iſrael* (ver. 19.) Theſe things I do but point at. The uſe I would at preſent rather improve the Doctrine unto, is,

1. To awaken all to a due Jealouſy over themſelves, leſt they ſhould have taken up Error inſtead of Truth; (and Reader whoever thou art, look not on thy ſelf as unconcerned in this uſe.) What hath been ſaid either of Man in general, or of good Men in ſpecial, is applicable unto every individual Man or Woman, according to their

reſpective

reſpective States and Conditions. Others are a Glaſs, wherein we may ſee our ſelves; *Prov.* 27. 19. therefore we ſhould every one be jealous of our ſelves; the want of this proves the ruine of many, and is highly prejudicial unto moſt. Men naturally are apt to be over-confident of themſelves: Hence the Scripture gives us ſuch frequent warnings of it; thus in thoſe Paſſages (*Prov.* 28. 26.) *He that truſteth in his own Heart (that is, his own Underſtanding) is a Fool.* 1 Cor. 8. 2. *If any Man thinketh he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing as he ought to know.* Gal. 6. 3. *If a Man thinketh himſelf to be ſomething, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himſelf.* 1 Cor. 10. 12. *Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall.* Once again. *Luke* 8. 18. *Whoſoever hath not, from him ſhall be taken, even that which he ſeemeth to have,* ὃ δοκεῖ ἔχειν, which ſome tranſlate, *thinketh he hath.* Theſe with other Paſſages of a like Import, plainly both intimate, that Men are marvelous apt to over-act their Confidence, with reference to themſelves; and alſo warn all to take heed of it; and our preſent Doctrine, may be ſufficient to awaken us all to a holy Jealouſie over our ſelves. But for the further purſuance of this Uſe, it may be obſerved, that the Errors, Deceits and Fallhoods that Men are ſubject to, too often take up, and tenaciouſly hold, are of two ſorts, or are reducible to two general Heads.

1. Such as reſpect Truth, as contained in, and revealed by the Scriptures.

2. Such as reſpect Men themſelves, whether the inward ſtate, frame, and acts of their own Souls, or their external Ways, and Actions, re-

ſpective unto Truth, as contained in the Scriptures. In reſpect of the former, Men's Underſtandings may be ſaid to deceive them. In reſpect of the latter, they may be ſaid to deceive their own Underſtandings. Hence, as ſome are turned aſide by a deceived Heart; ſo we hear of others, who think themſelves *to be ſomething when they are nothing.* A holy Jealouſy over themſelves, leſt they ſhould have taken up, and anſwerably do hold of the one, or the other of theſe kinds of Errors under a notion of Truth, both highly concerns and greatly becomes all the fallen Sons and Daughters of *Adam.* Let us exerciſe this Jealouſy over our ſelves, and that,

1. Leſt we ſhould have taken up any Error or Deceit, reſpecting Truth as contained and revealed in the Scriptures; be jealous leſt our Underſtandings ſhould have deceived us, and thereupon we have taken up ſuch Notions or Sentiments, under a notion of Truth, which indeed are, and will at laſt be found to be meer Miſtakes, Errors and Deceits, utterly diſſonant therefrom; and that,

1. In regard of the main and fundamental Doctrines of the Goſpel, ſuch as relate unto God, unto Jeſus Chriſt, or the way of Salvation by him; or thoſe indiſpenſible Duties of Faith and Holineſs. Errors and Deceits in and about theſe Doctrines, are more common among Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, than moſt Men are aware of, or are willing to believe. This is certain, that the bare Profeſſion or Enjoyment of the moſt apt, and effectual external means, whether the Word written, or the Miniſtry thereof, or any other Advantage ſubſervient to their Knowledg of, and

Guidance

Guidance into Truth, ſecures no Man from Soul-ruining Errors and Miſtakes in and about theſe Doctrines. The Apoſtle *James* ſaw it neceſſary to warn Profeſſors of Errors, about the Nature of God, (*Jam.* 1. 16, 17.) He ſuppoſes that they might charge their Sin upon him, who being the Father of Lights, and immutably ſo from everlaſting to everlaſting, is and can only be the Author of that which is good. So the Apoſtle *Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, (tho it were to their ſhame) *That all Men have not the Knowledg of God:* 1 Cor. 15. 34. Now all defects in Knowledg ſuppoſes ſomewhat of Error; and if Men may err about God, much more about Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator, the true Knowledg of whom flows purely from ſupernatural Revelation, and is no way aided by the Light of Nature, as the Knowledg of God abſolutely conſidered, is; and what Miſtakes the *Galatians*, tho Profeſſors of the Goſpel, were fallen into, about the way of Salvation by Chriſt, hath been already taken notice of. Let us then not be over confident of our ſelves, as though out of danger of having a Lie in our right Hand, reſpective to theſe Doctrines; and it may be added, that not only the darkneſs of our Underſtandings, and our proneneſs unto Error; but the Importance of a right underſtanding of theſe things, makes a holy Jealouſie over our ſelves highly neceſſary. To have a Lie in the right Hand, in matters wherein the Soul, and its eternal Welfare and Welbeing is ſo nearly concerned, is very dreadful. To have taken up any Falſe Notions, Errors or Miſtakes about theſe Doctrines, is always prejudicial, frequently deſtructive to the

Souls of Men, the loſs of which, is an Evil unknowable by Men any otherwiſe, than by the actual feeling and experience of it, and conſequently only known by Devils, and Men partaking with them in the ſame Miſery.

2, In regard of Doctrines, with the Practices depending on them, that are of an inferiour Nature; Errors in and about which, are conſiſtent with a ſaving State: Thus all thoſe Doctrines and Practices controverted among thoſe who have the like precious Faith, (*viz.*) *The Faith of God's Elect*, and who love our Lord Chriſt in ſincerity; and ſome ſuch there are. It is to admiration, how confident ſome Men are of having Truth on their ſide; and how tenacious thereupon they are of their own Opinions and Perſwaſions; and how immovable or obſtinately they perſiſt in the Practices whereinto they are led by them! Who yet have evidently taken up and imbraced Errors inſtead of Truth. Whence, would but ſuch Men be perſwaded of the darkneſs and weakneſs of their own Underſtandings, with their proneneſs to Error, ariſing from the Cauſes afore aſſigned; and thereupon allow themſelves the exerciſe of a due Jealouſie over themſelves; and laying aſide all Prejudices and Anticipations, would ſedately review their Notions and Sentiments, duly improving that Light offered for the diſcovery of their Errors; they might eaſily come to ſee, it is Error, not Truth, they have embraced, and are ſo tenacious of. Now certainly what hath been ſaid concerning Man's proneneſs to Error, with the Cauſes thereof, is ſufficient to work in all *Men* a Jealouſie

over

over themſelves, and excite them to a review of their Principles and Practices; eſpecially ſuch, as are confeſſedly more darkly revealed in the Scripture; neither will ſuch a Jealouſie, with the review occaſioned thereby, ſuppoſing the one duly bounded, and the other managed with that Sincerity, Care, and Diligence that becomes Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, be prejudicial to any: It may be highly advantagious unto ſome; thereby they will be either more confirmed in the Truth, ſuppoſing it's Truth they have imbraced; or brought to relinquiſh their Errors, ſuppoſing it is Error they have taken hold of. Truth never fears the Ballance, how often ſoever laid therein, ſuppoſing it held with an even hand; and this may be further conſidered, that in reſpect of Doctrines or Practices, that are truly controvertible; (for ſome Men will needs muſter up ſuch Doctrines among Controvertibles, which properly are not ſo:) But I ſay in reſpect of Doctrines truly controvertible, as being confeſſedly more darkly revealed in the Scriptures, there are ſeveral Circumſtances relating unto them, making this Jealouſie over our ſelves, reſpective to them, more or leſs neceſſary. I ſhall only give a twofold Inſtance.

1. According to the approbation or diſapprobation, the Doctrines or Practices under Conſideration have received from God; ſo is a holy Jealouſie over our ſelves more or leſs neceſſary.

2. According as the Doctrines or Practices we now ſpeak of, have been more or leſs generally received, and adhered unto by thoſe, who through-

throughout all Ages have obtained a good Report, both for their ſoundneſs in Judgment and holy walking with God; ſtill the more or leſs neceſſary is this Jealouſie over our ſelves. But to proceed;

3. In regard of Doctrines purely Practical, ſuch as are directive of Chriſtians, as to what is to be or not to be done, in the courſe of their Lives and Converſations. Mens Underſtandings may, and too often do deceive them about matters of Practice: Hence ſome account that unlawful which may not only be lawful, but an important Duty. Others account that lawful, yea poſſibly a Duty, which indeed is ſinful and unlawful: Hence a holy Jealouſie over our ſelves with reference to thoſe Doctrines directive of our Practices, is highly neceſſary, eſpecially in theſe times, and as to the Circumſtances we are now under. That the hand of God has been ſtretched out againſt the Land of our Nativity, as well as againſt the Nations round about us, and is not as yet turned back; but that greater Judgments are threatned, is the general accknowledgment of all, who have any *regard to the Works of the Lord, or the Operation of his Hands:* Hence that Repentance, Humiliation, with other holy Exerciſes, is the incumbent duty of all, according to the intereſt they have in the Provocations abounding among us, is granted by all, who own a divine Providence, with the reference that Sin has unto Judgments; and Repentance, Humiliation and Reformation, have unto the prevention of them, or the ſecurity of Men from them when they do come. But now this will be found true, which might have been

been a third Obſervation, and lies as plain in our Text as either of the former, That while Men hold faſt Deceit, or thoſe Errors and falſe Reaſonings, through which they have been ſeduced, and turned aſide into any Sin, or ſinful Practices, all means uſed to bring them to Repentance and Humiliation, proves utterly unavailable for that end and purpoſe. While Men *hold faſt Deceit, they will refuſe to return*; hence it is, that whatever Exhortations to theſe Duties are preſſed upon Men, by thoſe whom God hath made Watch-men among them, they meet with the ſame Reply, tho not verbal, yet practical, that the Jews of old made, and that probably the ſame way to the like Exhortations preſſed on them, *Wherein ſhall we return? Mal* 3.7. And how confident for the moſt part are thoſe that themſelves are but little, if at all, concerned in thoſe Duties, who yet have the chiefeſt hand in procuring and bringing down Judgments? And what is the reaſon but this, that there is ſome Miſtake, ſome Error or falſe Reaſoning, whereby they are deluded into a Perſwaſion that all is well with them? hence they ſay, as the People of old, (to take in both the verſions of thoſe words, *Hoſ.* 12. 8.) *He ſhall have Puniſhment of Iniquity, in whom is Sin*; as for us, *God ſhall find no Iniquity in us*; whence they perſwade themſelves, *no Evil ſhall come nigh them.* And thus Men flatter themſelves, till Judgment overtakes them as a Snare, and there is no eſcaping; this will coſt many dear. There is ſome miſtake or ſome falſe Reaſonings, either relating to matters of Sin, or matters of Duties, or to themſelves, as doing the one, or neglecting the

the other, that lulls them aſleep in carnal Security, and renders all Exhortations to the forementioned Duties of none effect. Hence ſuch Men will be left in the open Field till Storms of Divine Judgments overtake them: Whereas, would they but exerciſe a due Jealouſie over themſelves, and anſwerably make a through-Inquiry into their own Ways and Practices, and apply themſelves to thoſe Duties, they might be ſecure *under the ſhadow of the Almighty, and only behold the Deſtruction of the wicked:* but Men overacting their Confidence with reference to themſelves, hinder their Performance of thoſe Duties, whereby they lie open to the Stroke of Divine Judgments. Some tell us of certain kind of Birds that fly in Flocks, and being lighted on a Tree, the Fowler comes and ſhoots one, and then another, and they fall; and yet the reſt move not, till at the laſt all are deſtroyed. Now let us take heed, leſt through ſome Deceit, Error, or falſe Reaſonings, theſe Birds prove not our Emblem; God's Arrows have been and are abroad, and many have fallen by them; ſome by one, others by another; and yet, though our Lord Chriſt tells us, *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh*, few apply themſelves with ſerioufneſs to theſe Duties. 'Tis true, Men will ſay, Repentance is neceſſary, and if that prevent not, we are like to be a ruined People; yet themſelves remain ſecure; and the Reaſon lieth in an ungrounded Confidence that they have of themſelves, nouriſhed by ſome Error, Deceit or Falſehood, by means whereof they either ſee not the things they ſhould repent of, and be humbled

for,

for, to be evil; or elſe ſee not their own Danger, tho guilty of them. This will be found true, that whatever Ways and Courſes Men turned aſide into ways of Sin, may betake themſelves unto, for the ſecuring themſelves from Divine Judgments, without Repentance, Humiliation, and Reformation, will avail them nothing. See an excellent Diſcourſe of Dr. *Owen's* on thoſe words (*Luke* 13. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.) Repentance and Humiliation iſſuing in a thorough Reformation, would (if not prevent common Calamities from the Land, yet) ſecure our ſelves from them, at leaſt the Evil of them; but Men not exerciſing a due Jealouſie over themſelves, ſee not their own Evils, and thereupon neglect thoſe Duties. Neither can it be ſuppoſed, that while they hold faſt thoſe Errors, Deceits and Falſhoods, by which they have been ſeduced and turned aſide into Sin, they ſhould ſee their Sin, and anſwerably apply themſelves to them, *&c.* And while thoſe Duties are neglected, they do indeed, however they may flatter themſelves, lie open to Divine Judgments. Now let the Conſideration of what hath been ſaid, awaken us to this holy Jealouſie, and anſwerably make a through and impartial Inquiry into our Ways and Actions: But this ungrounded Confidence acted by Men with reference to themſelves, will prove their ruine; and it's no ſmall Evidence of the Generality of Men's over-acting their Confidence, with reference to themſelves, that ſo few Caſes of Conſcience are brought to them, whoſe *Lips ought to preſerve Knowledg.* It is a plain Argument, People truſt too much to their own Underſtandings; were there that Tender-

Tenderneſs of Conſcience in Profeſſors, that becomes Chriſtians, accompanied with a holy Jealouſie of their own Underſtandings, as more frequent and fervent Requeſts would be put up unto God, that he would *teach them what they ſee not*; ſo more Caſes of Conſcience would be put unto Men, and more Induſtry would be uſed to find out what is the good and acceptable Will of God, and wherein they fail in the doing of it; and by means of all, Men might and would know both the Plagues of their own Hearts, and Evils of their Lives, which being found out, repented of, and reformed; they would be ſafe, what Evils or Calamities ſoever are coming, whereby though thouſands ſhould fall by their ſides, and ten thouſands at their Right-hand; yet it ſhould not come nigh unto them: See *Pſal.* 93. 7, 8. But,

2. Let us be awakened to a holy Jealouſie over our ſelves, leſt we ſhould have taken up and imbraced any Error, or Deceit reſpecting our ſelves. It is poſſible that a Man that hath a clear and diſtinct Knowledg of the Doctrine of Regeneration, and is able to give an exact Deſcription of it, to ſhew wherein it doth conſiſt, and what a frame and diſpoſition of Heart is produced by it, may have his own Heart wrought to ſuch a Frame, as bears ſo great a likeneſs to the Frame of Heart produced by Regeneration, that he may conclude himſelf to be truly regenerate, when yet indeed and in truth he is not ſo. Now ſuch a Frame of Heart deceives a Man's own Underſtanding; *He thinketh himſelf to be ſomething, when he is nothing*: he is deluded by the Counterfeit of what he hath a true Notion of in his Mind. So a Man may put

put forth ſuch Acts, and perform ſuch Actions, as carry ſo great an Appearance of being true Grace, and truly gracious, as that tho he has a notional Knowledg of the nature of Grace, and all the Requiſites to truly gracious Actions; yet is himſelf deceived by them: he ſuppoſes them to be in reality what they carry an Appearance of, when indeed they are but the Counterfeits thereof. A good Nature may be ſo poliſhed by Education and Induſtry, with the ſuperaddition of ſome common Gifts and Operations of the Spirit, that it may ſeem to be truly renewed; and its Productions may look ſo much like the Fruits of the Spirit, that a Man, tho he has a clear Notion of that Change made by the renovation of the Spirit, and of the Fruits of the Spirit flowing therefrom; yet verily thinks himſelf to be renewed, and to bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit, when indeed it is otherwiſe: Thus in reſpect of thoſe, Divines uſually call *cloſe* or *ſecret Hypocrites*; a Man may be an Hypocrite, and yet not know it himſelf; the Shews and Appearances of Grace and Godlineſs deceive Men's own Underſtandings. It is often found, that Men of great Knowledg and Orthodox Judgments, are yet deceived in their own Acts and Actions; every Orthodox Divine is not a ſound Chriſtian: Let us then be awakened to a Jealouſie over our ſelves; it's dreadful to have Lamps in our Hands, with a confidence of having Oil in them, till the time to obtain it is over. But to haſten, Let the Conſideration of Men's proneneſs to Error, awaken us all to a holy Jealouſie over our ſelves, leſt we ſhould have taken up Error inſtead of Truth, and that as

Error

Error and Deceits reſpect Truth, as contained in the Scriptures, or as it reſpects our ſelves; and anſwerably make a through Inquiry, whether indeed we have not ſo done. And if any ſhall ſay, Seeing there is ſuch a Proneneſs in Man unto Error, and conſequently all Men are in danger to miſtake, and take up Error inſtead of Truth, then it is poſſible we may lie under ſome Error or Deceit, after the utmoſt Inquiry we can make. In anſwer, It muſt be granted, that it is poſſible it may be ſo; let me therefore adviſe to three things

1. Labour to intereſt Jeſus Chriſt in the Care of our Souls: Labour to get under his Care, that the prevention of our Ruine, or any Damage we may ſuſtain by Errors, may be his Concern as well as our own. But you will ſay, How ſhall we do that?

Anſw. 1. By committing our ſelves to him, as the Shepherd and Biſhop of Souls; *The Poor committeth himſelf to the Lord*, Pſal. 10. 14. by humble Supplication, that he will undertake the Work for us: See the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 139. *ult.*

2. Be not ſatisfied without the Approbation of God himſelf. Content not our ſelves without the ſealings of the Spirit, nor without his bearing Witneſs with our Conſciences, to the Sincerity, Uprightneſs, and Acceptableneſs of our Ways and Actions unto him. Take not up with any thing ſhort of what the Apoſtle had attained unto, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12.

3. Take the Comfort of what Grounds of hope we have, that through the free Grace of God we are delivered from Errors and Deceits; yet

yet maintaining a holy Jealouſie over our ſelves, leſt it ſhould be otherwiſe, and anſwerably be ſtill making a more full and through ſearch, whether we are not deceived, and have not taken up Errour inſtead of Truth.

2. Another Uſe I would more eſpecially make of the Doctrine, is, to caution all againſt Errour for the future: Take heed our own Underſtandings do not deceive us, and lead us into Errour; be very wary we are not impoſed upon, either by Satan or Men. Our own Underſtandings are not only dark and weak, ſubject to variety of Miſtakes and Falſe-reaſonings; but there is an Inclination, and ſtrange Proclivity unto Error connatural unto them, and Satan is continually endeavouring to deceive us; and Men have *their Slights and cunning Craftineſs, whereby they lie in wait to deceive:* Eph. 4. 14. Hence great Care and Diligence is indiſpenſably neceſſary unto our Preſervation from Error. Hence all Notions and Sentiments ariſing up in, or ſuggeſted to our Minds, as well as all Doctrines or Practices propoſed to, and preſſed upon us by Men, ought to be carefully weighed and duly examined, before they are imbraced and complied with. And let it be remembred that any Notion, Doctrine or Practice, may be weighed and examined with more Impartiality and Sincerity, before it be imbraced and actually cloſed with, then it can after: while it is only ſuggeſted to the Mind, or looked upon as anothers Opinion or Practice, the Mind may and ordinarily will with more freedom weigh and examine it; but when it is actually cloſed in with, that a Man

hath eſpouſed it as his own Opinion, or as his own Judgment, Self-love will greatly hinder from an impartial and through weighing of, and ſearching into it. And beſides, it is vaſtly more eaſie to reject an Error before it is actually imbraced, than it is to relinquiſh it afterwards. Error once taken hold of, is not eaſily let go again; Error ordinarily is held faſt; and therefore let us be excited to the greater Warineſs and Watchfulneſs againſt Error. When we ſee how ſtrangely tenacious Men are of Error, let that be the Uſe we make of it; think with our ſelves how careful ſhould we be, that we do not take up any Error inſtead of Truth. Oh! how much Prejudice do ſome good Men receive by the Miſtakes and Errors they have unwarily taken up and imbraced! and yet how tenacious are they of them? let them be warnings unto us. It highly concerns us to be very deliberate before we cloſe in with any Doctrine or Practice, eſpecially that differs from thoſe Doctrines and Practices, that have been generally received and walked in by true Saints; and that throughout all Ages, Men's (eſpecially good Men's) over-haſty taking up and imbracing Doctrines and Practices that are propoſed to, and preſſed upon them under the Notion of Truth, without a due uſe of the neceſſary means to find out whether they are ſo or no, has been one of the great Cauſes of the abounding of Errors among Profeſſors. Men having once imbraced an Error, they too commonly are exceeding tenacious of it; and beſides, Conſcience enforceth them not only to be tenacious of it themſelves, but to promote it among

among others; and hence it is, that Errors ſo much abound as they do: and therefore I ſay, let us be wary of imbracing Error inſtead of Truth. And to inforce this, together with the foregoing uſe, I would offer two things to Conſideration:

1. The Evil and Sinfulneſs of Error, and conſequently the Provocation it is unto God. Few Chriſtians apprehend there is ſuch an Evil in Error as there is, and that it is ſo provoking unto God as indeed it is, at leaſt that Error as ſuch, and conſequently every Error is ſo evil and diſpleaſing unto God. And therefore that we may be more ſenſible of the Evil and Sinfulneſs of Error, let theſe four things be conſidered:

1. That Error blots and defaces the Image of God in Man; the Image of God in Man, is Man's Conformity to, and Reſemblance of God, which reſpects his Underſtanding, as well as his Will and Affections: Hence the Image of God in Man is ſaid to conſiſt in *Knowledg*, as well as *in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs:* Col. 3. 10. Eph. 4. 24. compared together: *We are* renewed, (ſaith *Davenant*) according to the Image of God; *Cum illuſtrantur & ſanctificantur omnes Potentiæ & Inclinationes Animæ noſtræ.* All Error ſuppoſes a Defect in Knowledg, or is an Effect of Ignorance; *Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures*, ſaith our Lord Chriſt. Hence through Error Men come ſhort of the Glory of God, as well as through any defect in their Sanctification; and all Defects or Blots in the Image of God in his People, are ſinful and diſpleaſing to him.

2. Errordefiles the Nature of Men,as well as any moral Evil; Error it's true, being in the Underſtanding, it primarily defiles the Underſtanding; but as it proceeds from affected or voluntary Ignorance, it defiles the Conſcience; yea, it diffuſes a Defilement throughout the whole Soul. Hence the Apoſtle, having a peculiar reſpect to erronious Perſons, tells us, *They have their Minds and Conſciences defiled:* Tit. 1. 15.

3. That as Error it ſelf is a Sin, and is uſually, if not always, an occaſion of ſome other Sin, either of Omiſſion or Commiſſion: ſo both Error it ſelf, and thoſe Sins occaſioned by it, are lived impenitently in; Men humble not themſelves for ſuch Sins. Now Sin, tho it be a Sin of Ignorance, eſpecially when that Ignorance is voluntary, being lived impenitently in, may be greater and more provoking unto God, then other Sins are, that are of a more heinous Nature in themſelves, that men through the violence of a Temptation, or the ſtrong workings of a particular Luſt, are over-taken with, but are not perſiſted in.

4. Errors break that Unity that ought to be, and God delights to ſee among his People. God would have his People to be of *one Mind and one Judgment:* Now Error breaks this Unity, whence variety of Evils uſually iſſue. And let it be obſerved, that though the difference in Mind and Judgment among Chriſtians, will not excuſe any in whom thoſe Evils, occaſioned by, or ariſing from them, are found; yet they will be eminently charged upon thoſe on whoſe part the Errors lye. But,

Secondly,

Secondly, The other thing I would offer to Conſideration is this, That by how much the greater the Proviſion God has made, is, and the more full the Means he has vouchſafed for our coming to the Knowledg and preſervation in Truth are, by ſo much the more ſinful and provoking are Errors. Now conſider what Proviſion God hath made for, and what Means he vouchſafes to us in theſe Lands.

1. He has given us his Word, and that in our own Language, we may daily read in, and converſe with it.

2. He hath conſtituted a Miniſtry, raiſes up Men, and furniſheth them with Gifts ſutable for that Office, and that with reference to our Guidance into, and Eſtabliſhment in the Truth, *Eph.* 4. 11, 12, 13, 14.

3. God hath given his Spirit to abide with his Church here upon Earth; *Joh.* 14. 16. Hence by Prayer we may obtain his Teachings, and that is one of the great ends, with reference unto which he is given to, and left with the Church: *Joh.* 16. 13. Yea, God gives his Spirit to dwell in every individual Believer, and that with reference to the ſame end; *But ye* (ſaith the Apoſtle *John*, ſpeaking unto Saints) *have an Unction from the holy One, and ye know all things*; that is, all Truth neceſſary to be known; 1 *Joh.* 2. 20. The Apoſtle ſpeaks of them, as tho actually knowing all things. The Scripture ſometimes ſpeaks of that as true *de facto*, which on many accounts either ought to be, or may be ſo; as if he ſhould ſay, ſuch an advantage you have by *that Unction you received from the holy One*, to know all things; that it may well

be ſuppoſed of, and expected from you, that you do indeed know all things. There can hardly be any Error imbraced by a Believer, but it muſt be through his own Default.

4. God works providentially with reference unto our Guidance into, and Eſtabliſhment in the Truth. The Providences of God, as they are deſigned for; ſo, if wiſely obſerved and well improved, would highly conduce to our Guidance into, and Eſtabliſhment in the Truth. *I will guide thee with mine Eyes*, ſaith the Lord to a righteous Man, *Pſal.* 32. 8. But here is Man's Miſery, God *ſpeaks once, yea twice*, (viz. by his Works), *but Man perceiveth it not.* Now then God having made ſuch Proviſion, and vouchſafed ſuch a Sufficiency of Means for our Guidance into Truth, and preſervation from Error, our Errors muſt needs be greatly aggravated, and conſequently more provoking unto God. How careful then ſhould we be, to free our ſelves from Error? How diligently ſhould we inquire, Whether we have not already taken it up, how wary ſhould we be for the future, that we do not take up Error inſtead of Truth? I ſhall cloſe this with that of *Solomon*; *Buy the Truth, and ſell it not.* But one word more.

Laſtly, In caſe God has of his free Grace inſtructed us in Truth, and preſerved us from Error, let us praiſe the Mercy, and be exceeding thankful for it. God has done great things for us, conſidering the Multiplicity of Errors that now are abroad.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

THE

Covenant of Circumciſion,

THE

Covenant of Grace.

OR,

That that Covenant eſtabliſhed with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. 7. is the Covenant of Grace, clearly and fully proved.

Wherein the Miſtake of Mr. *Nehemia Cox*, in his Hiſtorical Account of the Fœderal Tranſactions of God with *Abraham*, are rectified, and the Foundation laid in that Covenant, to the Covenant-Intereſt and Baptiſm of the Infant-Seed of Believers more fully confirmed.

By *J. Whiſton*, Miniſter of the Goſpel.

And he gave him the Covenant of Circumciſion: ſo Abraham *begot* Iſaac, *and circumciſed him the eight day:* Acts 7. 8.

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The Covenant of Circumciſion, the Covenant of Grace, &c.

THat there is in Men, as in this fallen and corrupted Eſtate, a marvellous Propencity unto Errour, and that having once taken up and imbraced it, they are too commonly exceeding tenacious of it, hath been, as I conceive, ſufficiently evinced in the foregoing Diſcourſe. Thoſe Inſtances therein produced, do evidently declare it: Neither are there wanting too many Inſtances for the illuſtrating and confirming the Truth of what is there affirmed, among thoſe who ſtile themſelves, and may juſtly bare the Denomination of *Proteſtants*.

In all Controverſies, that are not meerly verbal, Errour muſt neceſſarily lye on the one ſide, and ſometimes on both. Truth cannot, but Error may be contradictory; and that there are ſuch Controverſies among *Proteſtants*, and they maintained and kept up with great Obſtinacy by the Letigant Parties, is obvious unto all. To paſs by all others, I ſhall only ſingle out that between *Pædo-Baptiſts* and *Antipædo-Baptiſts*, that no Infants are to be baptized. That ſome Infants are to be baptized, are Propoſitions, tho not abſolutely contrary, yet contradictory the one to the other; hence both cannot be true, Errour muſt lye on the one ſide, or the other ſide. And yet with what obſtinacy this Controverſy hath been, and ſtill is kept up, is ſufficiently known; hence as the Parties Letigant do mutually charge each other

other with the Evils afore diſcourſed of; ſo it muſt be granted on all hands, that the Charge is juſtly laid on the one party, at leaſt as to what yet appears, ſeems ſo to be. Where the Charge juſtly lieth, I ſhall for the preſent leave to the Judgment of all that are ſober and judicious, and refer the final Deciſion to Him that is ready to judg the quick and the dead, who as being in the Boſom of the Father, has a perfect Knowledg of Truth; ſo being above all poſſibility of any biaſs, on the one or the other hand, will truly determine without reſpect of Perſons; in the mean time, being paſt all rational doubt, ſatisfied that the Truth in this Controverſy lieth on the Affirmative Part, I have judged it an incumbant Duty to appear, according to Grace received, in defence of that Part. Neither am I as yet convinced, but that the ſame Duty is ſtill incumbant on me, and therefore having now again, as hath been judged by ſome, a Call by a late Tract publiſhed by Mr. *Nehemiah Cox* (intituled, *A Diſcourſe of the Covenants that God made with Man before the Law*, where this debate is revived) to appear in defence of the Truth. I have readily complied therewith, not ſo much that the Truth is like to be wreſted out of the Hands of any that are poſſeſſed of it, by what he hath ſaid, as that his Diſcourſe treating of the Covenants, and in ſpecial that entered with *Abraham*, I might take the advantage given, more fully to ſettle the Foundation laid in that Covenant to Infant-Baptiſm. But to come to the Diſcourſe by which I am called to this Work. In it the Author treats of God's Fœderal Tranſaction firſt with *Adam*, ſecondly

condly with *Noah*, thirdly with *Abraham*; they are the laſt that I judg my ſelf called to the Conſideration of. With reference unto theſe, he makes a threefold Inquiry; ſee *Chap.* 4. *Sect.* 3. p. 72. as a Foundation unto all which, he premiſes this remarkable Paragraph, which for the remarkableneſs of it, ſhall be tranſcribed verbatim, and thus he begins.

There is one thing more to be premiſed to the Conſideration of God's Covenant-Tranſactions with Abraham *in particular, which we have moſt clearly ſtated in the New Teſtament*, viz.

That with reſpect unto them, Abraham *is to be conſidered in a double Capacity, both as the Father of all true Believers, and as the Father and Root of the Iſraelitiſh Nation. And for both theſe Seeds, God did enter into Covenant with him; howbeit theſe Seeds being formally diſtinguiſht the one from the other; their Covenant-Intereſt muſt of neceſſity be divers, and fall under a diſtinct Conſideration, and the Bleſſings appropriated unto either, muſt be conveyed in a way agreeable to their peculiar and reſpective Covenant-Intereſt; and theſe things may not be confounded without a manifeſt hazard of the moſt important Articles in the Chriſtian Religion; and yet ſuch is the mutual reſpect of all God's Covenant-Tranſactions with* Abraham, *and ſuch was to be his Diſpenſation towards the Church for ſome Ages following, as did require a preſent Intermixture of the Promiſes, and an involving of Spiritual Bleſſings in the ſtead of Temporal; and of a Spiritual Seed in a Natural; this I ſuppoſe is more evident than to admit a Denial.*

This

This one thing that Mr. *Cox* premits, as a Foundation unto the enſuing Inquiries, is complicated and made up of ſeveral Particulars; As,

1. That *Abraham* is to be conſidered in a double Capacity, *viz.*

(1.) As the Father of all true Believers.

(2.) As the Father and Root of the Iſraelitiſh Nation; and he means, he is to be conſidered in this twofold Capacity, with reſpect to God's Covenant-Tranſactions with him, ſo he expreſly declares himſelf.

2. That theſe two Seeds, or kinds of Seed, are formally diſtinguiſhed the one from the other, *viz.* with reſpect to the Covenants, for ſo he ſuppoſes them to be two diſtinct Covenants, that God made with them as *Abraham*'s Seed; or, as he ſpeaks, entered with *Abraham* for them.

3. That hereupon their reſpective Covenant-Intereſt muſt of neceſſity be divers, and fall under a diſtinct Conſideration, and the Bleſſings appropriated to either, muſt be conveyed in a way agreeable to their peculiar and reſpective Covenant-Intereſt; and if we compare this with his inſuing Inquiry, it evidently appears, though he expreſſeth himſelf very darkly, that his plain meaning is, that theſe diſtinct Seeds, or kinds of Seed, as a Father unto which *Abraham* was now conſidered, being, as he had juſt afore ſuppoſed them to be, formally diſtinguiſhed the one from the other; there muſt of neceſſity be two diſtinct Covenants, the one the Covenant of Grace, the other the Covenant of Works; the ſame with that made with the People of *Iſrael* at Mount *Sinai*. And theſe two Covenants conveying

ing quite diſtinct kinds of Bleſſings, were entered with *Abraham* for them reſpectively.

4. That there was, and it was neceſſary there ſhould be, an intermixture of the Promiſes conveying thoſe diſtinct Bleſſings, Spiritual Bleſſings being involved, as he ſpeaks, in the ſhade of Temporal, and a Spiritual Seed in the ſhade of a Natural: theſe four particulars are included in that one General here premitted by our Author. Now there are four things in this Paragraf, that make it exceeding remarkable to me.

1. That Mr. *Cox* ſhould affirm, that this thing, including thoſe four Particulars, is moſt clearly ſtated in the New Teſtament, and yet give us no Intimations where.

2. That he ſhould ſay, there is a neceſſity that two diſtinct Covenants ſhould be entered with *Abraham* for thoſe two kinds of Seed, and yet give us no reaſon why he ſo judges,

3. That he ſhould affirm theſe things cannot be confounded without hazard to the moſt important Articles in the Chriſtian Religion, and yet not inſtance in any one that is hazarded thereby.

4. That which is moſt remarkable unto me is, That he ſhould ſay this is more evident than to admit of a denial. I conceive he muſt needs intend the ſame thing, that before he had ſaid was moſt clearly ſtated in the New Teſtament, and ſo that Particle, *this*, muſt have reference to all thoſe four Particulars before mentioned. But how Mr. *Cox* can poſſibly imagine, that all thoſe Particulars, yea, or any one of them in his ſence, ſhould be more evident than to admit of a denial, is to me matter of great Admiration; ſure he cannot

cannot but know that the whole of what he has ſaid, excepting that firſt Clauſe, *viz.* that *Abraham* muſt be conſidered in a double Capacity, and that as abſtracted from that account he gives of it, and that Paſſage concerning the involving of Spiritual Bleſſings in the ſhade of Temporal, is vehemently denied, not only by me, but by many others; yea, that the whole of what he hath ſaid, taken conjunctly, and in the ſence intended by him, is *uno ore* denied by all that have hitherto pleaded the Cauſe of Infant Baptiſm from *Abraham*'s Covenant. Now that Mr. *Cox* ſhould ſuppoſe that to be more evident than to admit of a denial, which is denied by Hundreds, or Thouſands, yea, almoſt by the whole Univerſal Church, without giving us any reaſon at all of that his ſuppoſal, is certainly matter of great Admiration. —— But Sand muſt be laid for a Foundation by the ableſt Builders, where better Materials are not to be had. Mr. *Cox* having laid this Foundation, ſuch as it is, proceeds to the Inquiries bottomed thereon; But for me to follow him κατὰ πόδα through them all, would be utterly impertinent, ſeeing there is no juſt Foundation at all for the one or the other of his two laſt Inquiries: I ſhall therefore in a direct Oppoſition to the very deſign of his whole Diſcourſe, as it concerns the Federal Tranſactions of God with *Abraham*, lay down a fourfold Propoſition, and offer ſomewhat for their Confirmation, eſpecially of the two former, and conſider whatever he has ſaid, that carries the leaſt Appearance of Oppoſition to any of them.

Prop. I.

Prop. 1. That God in making, or when he did make thoſe Promiſes unto *Abraham*, recorded *Gen.* 12. 2, 3. did not enter or eſtabliſh the Covenant of grace with him. This lieth directly oppoſite to what Mr. *Cox* affirms, *p.* 74. where ſaith he, in the Tranſaction of God with *Abraham*, recorded *Gen.* 12. he did ſolemnly confirm his Covenant with him; he means, he then eſtabliſhed, ſo he expreſſeth himſelf, *p.* 74. or made ſo; he expreſſeth himſelf *p.* 77. His Covenant evidently intending the Covenant of Grace. Now this I abſolutely deny, and on the contrary affirm, That in theſe Tranſactions of God with *Abraham*, he did not make or eſtabliſh the Covenant of Grace with him. The truth is, he did not then make any Covenant at all with him, and conſequently not the Covenant of Grace: And though the Proof lies upon the Opponant, and it might be enough for me to deny, yet I ſhall offer a threefold Argument to prove the Negative.

Arg. 1. Where we have neither the Name of a Covenant, nor the thing it ſelf, there no Covenant, and conſequently not the Covenant of Grace was made: But in thoſe Tranſactions of God with *Abraham*, we have neither the Name of a Covenant, nor the thing it ſelf. Therefore, *&c.* That we have not the Name of a Covenant, Mr. *Cox* acknowledges, and that here was nothing like a Covenant, taking that term (*Covenant*) in a proper Senſe, as it is alwayes taken when the Covenant of Grace is intended, is alike evident. Here are, it is true, ſome abſolute Promiſes made to *Abraham* perſonally conſidered, but not any made to his Seed, whether Natural or Spiritual, conveying

conveying unto them any particular Good; neither is here any Reſtipulation required, as there is, as I ſuppoſe Mr. *C.* will grant in the Covenant of Grace, as in all other Covenants, when that term is uſed in a proper ſenſe, there is. See Mr. *Cox* his Diſcourſe *pag.* 5. So that neither having the Name, nor the Thing it ſelf, it is utterly unſcriptural, yea unreaſonable to affirm, that any, in ſpecial that that Covenant of Grace was at this time entred with *Abraham*, it was only the *preaching of the Goſpel* to him, ſo the Apoſtle expreſly tells us, *Gal.* 3. 8.

Arg. 2. If the Covenant of Grace were at this time entred with *Abraham*, and this be a diſtinct Covenant from that mentioned, *Gen.* 17. 7. then there were two diſtinct Covenants of Grace entred with *Abraham*: but there were not two diſtinct Covenants of Grace entred with *Abraham*; therefore at this time, the Covenant of Grace was not entred with him. That that Covenant mentioned, *Gen.* 17. is the Covenant of Grace, ſhall be after proved: Whence in caſe this Covenant were the Covenant of Grace, and that a diſtinct Covenant from that, then there muſt needs be two diſtinct Covenants of Grace: which is falſe.

Arg. 3. The Covenant of Grace was made with *Abraham*, as actually conſtituted the Father of the Faithful; but at the time of this Tranſaction of God with him, he was not actually conſtituted in that Relation; therefore at that time the Covenant of Grace was not entred with him; it may ſeem that *Abraham* was not conſtituted in that Relation till the Change of his Name, *Gen.* 17. 5.

However

However this is certain, he was not to be looked upon in that Relation, till after thoſe noble Acts of his Faith, of which we have an account, *Gen.* 15. 6. ſeeing the Apoſtle expreſly tells us, he put forth thoſe Acts of Faith, *That he might become the Father of many Nations*, Rom. 4. 18. plainly implying he was not ſo before. Indeed in that *Gen.* 12. God intimated to him that he ſhould be for the future conſtituted in that Relation, but doth not then actually conſtitute him in it: but now, I ſay, the Covenant of Grace was made with him as the Father of the Faithful; ſo that at this Tranſaction God neither did nor could enter the Covenant of Grace with him. But let us ſee what Mr. *Cox* hath ſaid in Confirmation of his Affirmation, *viz.* That God in this Tranſaction with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 12. did enter or make the Covenant of Grace with him, and all that I can find is only this, *viz.* That the Covenant of Grace was, as the Apoſtle tells us, *Gal.* 3. 17. Confirmed of God in Chriſt 430 Years before the giving of the Law at Mount *Sinai*. Now, ſaith he, from the giving of that firſt Promiſe to *Abraham*, recorded *Gen.* 12. 2, 3. unto that very Night in which the Children of *Iſrael* were delivered out of their Egyptian Bondage, is the Computation of thoſe Years to be made, which he thinks will be evident to any that ſhall diligently compare the Chronology of thoſe times, with the expreſs Teſtimony of *Moſes*, *Exod.* 12. 41. Now to this I ſhall ſay in the general, that had Mr. *C.* given us an exact Computation of the Chronologies of thoſe times, it might have given ſome more light into this matter, but that I ſuppoſe he knew would

be a matter of no ſmall difficulty to do: I remember what *Illyricus* ſaith, *Ab hoc tempore*, meaning the time of *Jacob*'s Death, * *Seriem annorum non poſſumus pari facilitate deducere.* And he gives this reaſon for it, *Nam Geneologiæ haud quaquam eadem ratione pertaxuntur, in* Ægypto *qua hactenus factum eſt*; ſo that how evident ſoever Mr. *Cox* ſuppoſes it will be, yet this learned Man was of another mind: but more particularly, I ſhall offer theſe few things to conſideration.

* Illyricus *de Ratione Lib* 4. *p.* 52.

1. That it is very uncertain where to fix the Epocha of theſe four hundred and thirty Years mentioned by Moſes, and after him by the Apoſtle. There needs no other Proof of this, then the Diſagreement and ſharp Conteſts found amongſt Interpreters and Chronologers about it; *vix duo hactenus inter ſe conveniunt*, ſaith *Pareus*. I ſuppoſe Mr. *C.* is not ignorant of what he hath ſaid to prove that theſe Years muſt neceſſarily be reckoned from the Eſtabliſhment of that Covenant, *Gen.* 15. 18. which he takes to be the ſame with that, *Gen.* 17. I ſhall not determine; only this I ſhall ſay, the uncertainty is ſo great, as that no Argument can be taken therefrom to prove that the Promiſe or Covenant the Apoſtle hath reference unto, is that mentioned *Gen.* 12.

2. That it is utterly improbable that theſe (430) Years do, if not abſolutely certain that they do not bear Date from the giving of thoſe Promiſes *Gen.* 12. unto *Abraham*: for let but theſe three things be conſidered.

1. That

1. That there is a probability at leaſt, that thoſe (400) Years mentioned *Gen.* 15. 13. and thoſe (430) Years mentioned by *Moſes*, and by the Apoſtle, intend one and the ſame number of Years, both *Pareus* and many other Interpreters conclude, and anſwerably muſt begin & end at the ſame times, the thirty odd Years not being at firſt mentioned; tho after, when there is a more exact account of the time of the *Iſraelites* abode in *Egypt*, including their Peregrination in *Canaan*, is given, they are expreſt. Now it is agreed on by many, if not by moſt, that thoſe 400 Years began either at the Birth of *Iſaac*, or at *Iſhmael*'s mocking of him; and that they muſt begin at the one or the other of thoſe times, ſeems evident, becauſe the Predictions expreſly concern *Abraham*'s Seed, and not *Abraham* himſelf; the Words are, *Know of a Surety, that thy Seed ſhall be a ſtranger in the Land that is not theirs*: So that ſuppoſing theſe diſtinct Numbers, *viz.* 400, and 430. intend, as to their beginning and ending, one and the ſame Period of time, they muſt at leaſt publickly be dated, either at *Iſaac*'s Birth, or *Iſhmael*'s Perſecuting, as the Apoſtle interprets his mocking of him.

2. Suppoſe the 430 Years muſt begin 30 Years before the 400, yet this 430 Years muſt be dated at, if not after *Abraham*'s coming into the Land of *Canaan*; this is not only expreſly affirmed by the 70 Tranſlaters, in their Verſion of that *Exod.* 12.40. but is neceſſarily implied in the Text, for ſo the Words run, *And the ſojourning of the Children of* Iſrael, *who dwelt in* Egypt, *was* 430 *Years.* It is not ſaid indeed they did ſojourn ſo long in

gypt, but their ſojourning was ſo long. Now they cannot poſſibly be ſaid to ſojourn in *Canaan* before *Abraham* come into it, and that of their ſojourning in that Land, and in *Egypt*, the Text there ſpeaks, I conceive is agreed on by all; whence it appears, that thoſe 430 Years, muſt neceſſarily begin after *Abraham*'s coming into *Canaan*. Hence,

3. That thoſe Promiſes, *Gen.* 12. 2, 3. were given to *Abraham* ſometime, how long, is hard to determine, before he came into *Canaan*; they were given him while in *Ur* of the *Caldeans*, after which he dwelt ſometime in *Charran*, yea, and a conſiderable time, as appears *Gen.* 12. 5. Now ſhould we date theſe Years intervening, between the giving of thoſe Promiſes, and the coming of the Children of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, they would amount to many more than 430, ſeeing, as all agree, yea, Mr. *Cox* himſelf affirms, there paſt exactly ſo many Years from *Abraham*'s coming into *Canaan*, unto the Children of *Iſrael*'s going out of *Egypt*: From the whole it is, if not abſolutely certain, yet exceeding probable, That that cannot be the Promiſe, or Covenant, from the giving of which, to the giving of the Law, there are ſaid to be 430 Years; it may rather ſeem it was that Promiſe mentioned *Gen* 12. v. *6*. But,

4. Suppoſe, which yet I grant not, that the 430 Years are to be reckoned from God's giving thoſe Promiſes, 12. *Gen.* 2, 3. Yet it cannot be from thence concluded, that the Covenant of Grace was then, or in them eſtabliſhed with *Abraham*. Mr. *Cox* himſelf grants, that the Covenant

nant of Circumciſion, as he calls it, *viz.* that Covenant mentioned *Gen.* 17. 7. which they take to be the old Covenant, but we affirm to be the Covenant of Grace, was not perfected at one Tranſaction, nor all the Promiſes of it made to *Abraham* at one time; and this I ſhall readily grant, that God in making thoſe Promiſes, *Gen.* 12. did begin to deal with *Abraham*, with reference to the Eſtabliſhment of the Covenant of Grace with him; and anſwerably, that thoſe Promiſes did prepare the way thereunto, and do contain the Bleſſings of it, as more generally revealed. And which was afterwards more particularly expreſt, and the Apoſtle might compute the Years intervening the making that Covenant, after confirmed in Chriſt, and the giving the Law, from the firſt Tranſaction of God with *Abraham* with reference thereunto, which is no Proof, that the Covenant was then eſtabliſhed between God and *Abraham*. But Laſtly,

Suppoſe we ſhould grant that the Covenant of Grace was entered with, or, as Mr. *Cox* expreſſeth it, *revealed to* Abraham *in thoſe Promiſes*, Gen. 12. Yet that is no Argument at all, that that Covenant *Gen.* 17. is not the Covenant of Grace. The firſt Lines of the Covenant of Grace might be then drawn, as Mr. *Cox* ſaith, the firſt Lines of the Covenant at Mount *Sinai*, were firſt drawn in the Eſtabliſhment of that Covenant, *Gen.* 17. and yet the ſame Covenant might be more fully and explicitly entered in that Tranſaction recorded *Gen.* 17. and that is enough as to my preſent purpoſe. This I ſuppoſe I may ſafely ſay, is more evident than to admit of a de-

nial, at leaſt by Mr. *Cox*; and from the whole of what hath been ſaid, we may evidently ſee of how little uſe this Obſervation about the Years, intervening between the Covenant confirmed in Chriſt, and the giving of the Law at Mount *Sinai*, is as to Mr. *Cox*'s purpoſe.

But to proceed to the ſecond Propoſition, the more full Eſtabliſhment of which is, that I peculiarly deſigned theſe Sheets for, and that is this:

2. *Prop.* That that Covenant eſtabliſhed with *Abraham* and his Seed in their Generations, *Gen.* 17. 7. is the Covenant of Grace, or that gracious Covenant confirmed in Chriſt, according unto which, all the Elect always have been, ſtill are, and yet ſhall be ſaved. And for a more full Eſtabliſhment of this Propoſition, wherein the Covenant-Intereſt, and by Conſequence the Baptiſm of the Infant-Seed of Believers, is peculiarly concerned, I ſhall ſpeak to it both negatively, and poſitively.

Firſt, Negatively. And here I ſhall firſt offer ſomewhat to prove, that this Covenant was not the old Covenant, or the ſame with that entered with the People of *Iſrael* at Mount *Sinai*: And then conſider what Mr. *Cox* hath ſaid in confirmation of his Suppoſition, *viz.* That it was the old Covenant; and that this is his Opinion, (though he expreſſeth not himſelf *in totidem verbis*, that I have yet obſerved) is ſufficiently evident from the whole deſign of his Diſcourſe, at leaſt ſo far as it concerns the Covenant-Tranſactions of God with *Abraham*; and more eſpecially *pag.* 104. and 113. and frequently elſwhere; as alſo by his conſtant diſtinguiſhing of it from the Covenant

of

of Grace. Now in a direct oppoſition unto this Suppoſition of his, I ſhall indeavour to prove that it was not the old Covenant. Indeed I ſhould ſufficiently diſcharge the part of a Reſpondent, to anſwer what he hath ſaid to prove that it is; and beſides, to prove that it is the Covenant of Grace, will ſufficientlyoverthrow this Suppoſal of his; but yet *ex abundanti*, I ſhall offer ſomewhat to prove that it was not the old Covenant. And,

1. If the Scripture continually declares, that the Covenant made a t Mount *Sanai* was the old Covenant; and no where declares that this Covenant made with *Abraham* was ſo: Then that Covenant made at Mount *Sinai*, and not this made with *Abraham*, was the old Covenant. But the Antecedent is true, therefore the Conſequent. As God is the Author and Eſtabliſher of all Covenants, that have paſt between Himſelf and Man; ſo we are to be regulated in our Notions and Conceptions of them, by the Revelation he hath made of them in his Word. Hence, for any to affirm, that this Covenant eſtabliſhed with *Abraham* was the old Covenant, when God hath no where declared that it was ſo, is openly to declare themſelves to be guided by their own Fancies and Imaginations, and not by the unerring Light of the Scriptures. But eſpecially, when God himſelf hath declared expreſly in his Word, yea once and again, that there is another Covenant, *viz.* that made at Mount *Sinai*, that he gives the denomination of the old Covenant unto. And this may be further obſerved, That the ſameneſs of ſome particular Good promiſed, and Duties commanded, in this Covenant eſtabliſhed

with *Abraham*, and that made at Mount *Sinai*, cannot juſtly be interpreted a Revelation from God, that the Covenants are one and the ſame; there may be obſerved an Identity, or Sameneſs, both of Good promiſed, and Duties commanded, in the Covenant of Nature, and the Covenant of Grace, in ſundry Particulars; and yet the Covenants are not only diſtinct, but of quite different natures and tenors. Now that the Scriptures declare, that the Covenant made at Mount *Sinai*, is the old Covenant, is plain; ſee *Jerem.* 31. 32. with *Heb.* 8. 10. and let our Opponants ſhew wherever the Covenant made with *Abraham* is declared in Scripture to be the old Covenant.

Arg. 2. The Law or the old Covenant was ordain'd by Angels in the hand of a human Mediator, a Mediator that was a mere Man: but this Covenant eſtabliſhed with *Abraham*, was not ordained by Angels in the hand of a humane Mediator: therefore this Covenant was not the Law, or the old Covenant. The *Major* is expreſly affirmed by the Apoſtle, *Gal.* 3. 19. If any ſhall affirm that the Covenant made with *Abraham* was ſo ordained, it concerns them to prove it.

Arg. 3. The Law or old Covenant was given 430 Years after the Covenant of Grace was eſtabliſhed with *Abraham:* but this Covenant entered with *Abraham* was not entered 430 Years after the Covenant of Grace was entered with him; therefore this Covenant cannot be the Law or old Covenant. The *Major* is evident from the expreſs Words of the Apoſtle, *Gal.* 3. 17. The

Minor

Minor is evident from the Hiſtory of God's Covenant-Tranſaction with *Abraham*.

Arg. 4. God himſelf expreſly denies that this Covenant eſtabliſhed with *Abraham* was the old Covenant: Therefore, that God expreſly denies the Covenant eſtabliſhed with *Abraham* to be the old Covenant, is evident, *Deut.* 5. 2, 3. where ſaith *Moſes*, ſpeaking by the Spirit of God, *The Lord our God made a Covenant with us in* Horeb: *The Lord made not this Covenant with our Fathers.* Now, that under this Term *Fathers*, we muſt neceſſarily include *Abraham*, cannot be denied: Whence it is evident, that the Covenant made in *Horeb* (that is at *Mount Sinai*) was not made with *Abraham*. And that which may yet further confirm us, if it needs any further Confirmation, is this, that the Lord himſelf expreſly diſtinguiſheth that Covenant made with *Abraham*, from that Covenant made at Mount *Sinai*, Deut. 29. 1. *Theſe are the Words of the Covenant*, viz. which they were now entring with God, as is expreſt *ver.* 10. and ſo on: And that this was the Covenant made with *Abraham*, is expreſly declared, *ver.* 13. Now this Covenant is expreſly ſaid to be another Covenant, beſides that made in *Horeb*; ſo *ver.* 1. they could not be one and the ſame Covenant. Now, what can poſſibly be more plain? who can with any pretence to any attendance to divine Revelation, queſtion, whether that Covenant made with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. 7. be the old Covenant, or the ſame Covenant with that made with the People of *Iſrael* at Mount *Sinai*, when the Lord himſelf not only denies that that Covenant made at Mount *Sinai*, was made with

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Abraham, but evidently, and in plain Words, diſtinguiſheth the one from the other? And that which may yet further confirm us, is, that the Scriptures every-where ſpeak of the Covenant made with *Abraham* in the ſingular Number; and no where give the leaſt intimation, that there were two Covenants, the one of which can poſſibly be ſuppoſed to be the Covenant of Grace, and the other the old Covenant. Theſe Arguments are ſo plain, that nothing can be rationally replied. Not that I ſuppoſe, nothing at all can be by the Wit of Man invented (Alas! Man hath found out many Inventions) to deceive himſelf, and others: But I ſay nothing can be ſaid, that ſhall carry any appearance of a juſt Reply. But let us ſee what Mr. *C.* hath ſaid in Confirmation of his Suppoſition, whether that may not counterballance what hath been now ſaid, to prove, that this Covenant was not the old Covenant, and in paſſage, I ſhall only remark, that in caſe he expected that his Diſcourſe ſhould be of any uſe for the clearing up that great Point, concerning the right Subjects of Baptiſm, as he profeſſedly deſigned it, he ſhould have applyed himſelf with the utmoſt diligence, to have proved this his Suppoſition. Of all that he affirms in his whole Diſcourſe, this required the cleareſt and moſt convincing proof. Certainly he could not but foreſee, that his Reader, ſuppoſe him inquiſitive after Truth, would expect a clear, ſolid, and ſubſtantial Proof of this Suppoſition: But alas! that muſt not be expected, ſeeing he declines the handling of things in a polemical way, but that quite ſpoils his deſign, and renders his whole Diſcourſe utterly

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uſeleſs, as to ſuch Readers. And he might eaſily have foreſeen that it would ſo do, two things among others made it indiſpenſably neceſſary to his attaining the end profeſſedly aimed at, that he ſhould either have produced ſome plain and expreſs Scripture one or more: Or elſe, that he ſhould have laid down ſome ſound Arguments, well bottom'd upon the Scripture. The firſt is, the Intereſt that this Covenant under Conſideration, is pleaded to have in the practice of Infant-Baptiſm. Himſelf tells us, he had obſerved that the main hinge of the Controverſy, about the right Subjects of Baptiſm, does turn upon that Covenant, *Gen.* 17. thus in his Preface, *pag.* 2. Neither do I think he is much miſtaken in that his Obſervation. Now he knows that we that plead for Infant-Baptiſm, do affirm that that is the Covenant of Grace; ſurely then, when he not only denies that, but affirms the quite contrary, (*viz.*) that it is the old Covenant; in which we readily grant, that Infant-Baptiſm is not concerned, he ſhould have well eſtabliſhed that his Affirmation, otherwiſe he might well ſee, he would leave us where we were. 2. That which made this neceſſary, is the oppoſition that his Suppoſition bears to the judgment of the generality, if not univerſality, of thoſe, who among Proteſtants have had the repute of Orthodox, and its falling in, and exact Compliance with the Notions that both the Papiſts and *Socinians* have of this Covenant; and what an ill repute both theſe Sects have among Proteſtants, is not unknown. Now tho it is true, it's not ſufficient Proof of any Doctrine or Tenent, that it is held by the generality

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of Orthodox Divines, nor a ſufficient Confutation to ſay it is held by Papiſts and *Socinians*; yet he might well conclude, that thoſe that are Proteſtants, and reſolve ſo to continue, will not, without very good Proof, embrace a Notion ſo directly oppoſite to the judgment of all Orthodox Divines, and ſo exactly complies with the Sentiments of thoſe who are of ſo ill Fame amongſt them; and the conſideration of the time our Lot is caſt in, with the Circumſtances we are under, adds to the neceſſarineſs of a clear Proof of any Doctrine or Tenent of this Nature; ſo that tho in other parts of his Diſcourſe, naked Suggeſtions might be more tolerable, yet here they are intolerable. And if it be ſaid, that tho Mr. *C.* has declined the handling of this Queſtion, between him and the *Pædobaptiſts*, relating to this Covenant in a Polemical way, yet he hath given a ſufficient enforcement to this his Suppoſition; whether he hath done ſo or no, ſhall now be conſidered.

And that I might not paſs by any thing that he hath ſaid, in Confirmation of his Suppoſition; I have with what diligence I could, ſearched again and again the whole of his enſuing Diſcourſe, and can find only theſe few Paſſages ſcattered here and there, that can with any ſhew of Reaſon, be ſuppoſed to carry on that Deſign, which I ſhall briefly weigh. The firſt is that *pag.* 104. *line* 13. where, ſays he, having reſpect to this Covenant, it is obſervable, that in this tranſaction of God with *Abraham*, we firſt meet with an expreſs injunction of Obedience to a Command, and that of poſitive Right, and that as the Condition of Covenant-Intereſt; and the whole is uſhered in with this Pro-

Prologue, *I am the Almighty God, walk thou before me, and be thou perfect.* In which Words, a ſtrict and intire Obedience to his, (that is, God's) Precepts is required, in order to the inheriting of the good things that were to be given by this Covenant.

In anſwer unto which I muſt ſay, I ſhould never have imagined that this Paſſage had been deſigned as a Proof, that this Covenant was the old Covenant, had it not been uſhered in with ſuch an obſervable Term: I ſhall only add, that let that miſtake be rectified, *viz.* that Obedience to a Command of poſitive Right (he means the Command concerning Circumciſion) was requited as the Condition of Covenant-Intereſt; for Circumciſion was not required unto Covenant-Intereſt, but did ſuppoſe it; compare *Gen.* 17. 7, 8. with 11. I ſay, let this Miſtake be rectified, and I ſhall not be ſo uncharitable, as to think it needs any Anſwer at all; ſure none will deny, but Baptiſm, though a poſitive Duty, with ſtrict and entire Obedience, is required in the Covenant of Grace.

Secondly, The ſecond Paſſage that occurs, wherein the ſame Deſign ſeems to be carried on, is in his 108. *pag.* Where having ſaid, *there is no way of avoiding confuſion and entanglement in our conceptions of theſe things, but by keeping before our Eyes the diſtinction of* Abraham's *Seed:* what things he intends is hard for me to imagine: but be they what they will, ſure they are ſome things, that he had immediately before laid down, which if ſo, I muſt ſay they are only ſuch as have a being in his own Imagination, and none in the Scriptures. Hence

Hence the avoiding or not avoiding of Confuſion or entanglements in our conceptions of them, is of no concern as to the Controverſy under debate, but having thus expreſt himſelf, he immediately ſubjoins, Neither can I ſee any reaſon for an aſſignment of Covenant-Intereſt in all Spiritual Bleſſings, typified as well as in the Temporal, that were the Types of them to the carnal Seed; and yet not to admit the conveyance of the ſame Covenant to hold good in point of Temporal Bleſſings, to the Spiritual Seed; ſeeing, as ſome conceive, both are directly included in the ſame Covenant, and the Promiſe of both was ſealed with the ſame Seal.

Now tho Mr. *C.* expreſs himſelf ſomewhat odly, and obſcurely, yet as his Deſign is, or at leaſt ſeems to be, to diſprove our Aſſertion, *viz.* That this Covenant is the Covenant of Grace, and by Conſequence to eſtabliſh his own Suppoſition, *viz.* That it was the old Covenant; ſo he ſeems to reaſon thus, Seeing we affirm that this is the Covenant of Grace, and anſwerably that it did convey both the Temporal Bleſſings to *Abraham*'s Natural Seed as Types, and alſo the Spiritual Bleſſings typified by them; ſo now under the New Teſtament, it muſt convey Temporal Bleſſings as the Type, as well as the Spiritual Bleſſings typified by them, to his Spiritual Seed. To which I anſwer, How far the Covenant did extend to *Abraham*'s Natural Seed; and how far, or to whom of them it did convey either Temporal or Spiritual Bleſſings, meerly as ſuch, hath been elſewhere declared, and is unneceſſary here to be repeated, at preſent, as previous to the diſcovery of

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the frivolouſneſs of this Reaſoning; I ſhall only ſay, that it might have been of ſome uſe, had our Author ſhewed us what Temporal Bleſſings he means, which, as Types of Spiritual Bleſſings, were conveyed to *Abraham*'s Natural Seed. By this Covenant, he ſeems to diſtinguiſh them from the Land of *Canaan:* but now certainly he cannot but know, that the only Temporal Bleſſing that we affirm, was conveyed to *Abraham*'s Natural Seed, by this Covenant, as a Type of any Spiritual Bleſſing, was the Land of *Canaan* it ſelf. Whence the only ſcruple that can ariſe from what we affirm is this, *viz.*

How the Promiſe of the Land of *Canaan* could convey both a Temporal Bleſſing, *viz.* that Land it ſelf, as a Type of a Spiritual Bleſſing, and the Spiritual Bleſſing typified by it, to *Abraham*'s Natural Seed, and yet only conveyed the Spiritual Bleſſing typified to his Spiritual Seed. And the only Reaſon, that Mr. *C.* aſſigns why this cannot be, is this, becauſe he cannot ſee any Reaſon, why under the firſt Teſtament, both a Temporal Bleſſing as a Type, and the Spiritual Bleſſing typified, ſhould be conveyed to *Abraham*'s Natural Seed, and yet only the Spiritual Bleſſing typified ſhould be conveyed to his Spiritual Seed, ſeeing both are directly included in the ſame Covenant, and the Promiſe of both ſealed with the ſame Seal. To which I ſhall ſay three things.

Firſt, That it is no Reaſon to prove, that ſuch a thing cannot be, becauſe one Man cannot ſee any Reaſon why it ſhould be.

Secondly, That whether any Reaſon can be ſeen by him, or any body elſe, or no, yet it is certain it hath

hath been ſo; and that from the very firſt eſtabliſhment of the Covenant with *Abraham* to this very day, this Promiſe hath conveyed to very many the Spiritual Bleſſings typified, when yet it hath not conveyed to them any Intereſt in, or Right to the temporal Bleſſing, as the Type. It did ſo to *Abraham* himſelf, and it did ſo to many of his Children.

That it did convey the ſpiritual Bleſſing typified to *Abraham* himſelf, is evident from that of the Apoſtle, in *Heb.* 11. 10. By virtue of what Promiſe did *Abraham look for that City*, if not by virtue of this? And yet it did not convey unto him the Land of *Canaan* it ſelf; no, *not ſo much of it as whereon to ſet his Feet*, as *Stephen* ſpeaks. And that it did alike convey the ſpiritual Bleſſing to many of his ſpiritual Seed under the Firſt Teſtament, who had no Intereſt in that Land, is alike evident.

Witneſs all thoſe of *Abraham*'s natural Seed, that were alſo his ſpiritual Seed, antecedent to their actual Poſſeſſion of that Land. So witneſs all the ſincere Proſelytes, that joined themſelves to the Lord during the ſtanding of the Jewiſh Church, they had a Right to the ſpiritual Bleſſing typified, and that by virtue of this very Promiſe, and yet no Poſſeſſion, no, not ſo much as whereon to ſet their Feet, as it is ſaid of *Abraham*, in the Land of *Canaan*; and why ſhould any queſtion how this can be under the New Teſtament, which was ſo common under the Old, is unaccountable as to me.

Thirdly;

Thirdly, The plain Reaſon of this Aſſignment of Covenant-Intereſt in Spiritual Bleſſings, typified by the Land of *Canaan*, as well as in that Temporal Bleſſing as a Type, unto *Abraham*'s Natural Seed, and yet of Covenant-Intereſt only in the Spiritual Bleſſing typified to his Spiritual Seed, ſo far as ſuch an Aſſignment was to be made, is, becauſe it was the Will and Pleaſure of God, that the Natural Seed ſhould enjoy both the Temporal and the Spiritual Bleſſings, but that his Spiritual Seed ſhould only enjoy the Spiritual Bleſſings and not the Temporal: God, as I may ſo ſpeak, firſt gave the good of the Covenant in the Shell, but after gives the Kernel without the Shell, and no other Reaſon is to be aſſigned hereof, but his meer Will and Pleaſure. But however, this is enough for us to prove, that in this Promiſe of *Canaan* there was included a Spiritual Good, *viz.* Heaven as typified by that Land, and that that Promiſe does ſtill convey an Intereſt in that Spiritual Good, to all *Abraham*'s Spiritual Seed; if any ſhall judg themſelves to have ſufficient ground ſtill, to lay claim to the Temporal Good as the Type, they ſhall not be oppoſed by me.

Now that that Promiſe did imply or include a Spiritual Good, is evident, by *Abraham*'s *looking for a City that hath Foundations* by virtue of it.

Mr. *C.* himſelf, I ſuppoſe, will readily grant this, and that this Promiſe doth convey the ſame Spiritual Good to all his Spiritual Seed, is evident from this Covenant, its having received its confirmation in Chriſt, and conſequently its being not diſannuled, and the promiſe thereof unrevoked, and conſequently applicable to all the

Spiritual Seed of *Abraham*, only let this one thing be added, that it is not unuſual for the Prophets and holy Men of God, to promiſe ſpiritual Things in terms, that according to the letter only, intend a temporal good, when yet thoſe, to whom the Promiſe does appertain, can only lay claim to the ſpiritual good typified, and not to the temporal tipifying: take only that one inſtance, Iſa. 57. 13. *He that putteth his truſt in me* (they are the words of the Lord by the Prophet) *ſhall poſſeſs the Land, and ſhall inherit my holy Mountain.*

Now I would deſire to know whether this Promiſe be not applicable to Beleivers under the New-Teſtament; and hence whether Believers may not now lay claim to, and appropriate to themſelves the ſpiritual good typified, when yet they can lay no claim to any part of that Land? and why the like Aſſignment may not be made with reſpect to this Promiſe of the Covenant, I cannot conjecture. From the whole we may ſee, how inſignificant this reaſoning of our Authour is, to prove that this Covenant under conſideration was the Old-Covenant.

But to proceed, in his Pages 122 and 123 we have three Scriptures cited, in purſuance of the ſame deſign, namely, to prove that that Covenant, *Gen.* 17. was the Old-Covenant, and his deſign in the general is this, To prove that Circumciſion did belong to the Moſaical Oeconomy, and conſequently that this Covenant whereunto Circumciſion was anexed, muſt needs be the Law or old Covenant.

In anſwer to this, I ſhall offer theſe two things.

Firſt, That it cannot be certainly proved that Cir-

Circumſicion did at all, much leſs that it did equally and alike, belong to the Moſaical Oeconomy as well, or as Mr. *Cox* expreſſeth it, no leſs then any other part of the Law given by him. As for the paſſages cited by our Author, they are very far from proving any ſuch thing, let us briefly review them. The firſt is *Rom.* 3. 1, 2. where the Apoſtle makes theſe two terms, the Law and Circumciſion, convertible terms, and tells us, that the *Jew* or the *Circumciſion*, that is the Circumciſed, *had much advantage every way* above other Nations, and inſtances in particular in their having the Oracles of God committed unto them. But how this ſhould prove that Circumciſion did no leſs belong to the Moſaical Oeconomy than any other part of the Law, is to me unimaginable, nay I doubt not but to ſhew it proves the direct contrary, of which more anon.

2dly. The next paſſage, is that of the ſame Apoſtle, *Gal.* 5. 3. where, ſays he, *I teſtifie again to every man that is Circumciſed, that he is a debtor to do the whole Law:* and Mr. *C.* thinks this was the direct, and proper uſe of Circumciſion, *viz.* to oblige the *Jews* to keep the Law, and that according to the firſt inſtitution of it. To which I would ſay three things.

Firſt, That the Apoſtle here, may, as he ſeems evidently to do, ſpeak of Circumciſion, according to the falſe Notions that the falſe Teachers had of it, and anſwerably, tho we read not of its appointment to any new uſe different from what it had at the firſt Inſtitution of it; yet the falſe Teachers might, as it's evident they did, miſtake that uſe of it, and preſſed it upon the *Galatians* to a

quite different uſe from what God had appointed it unto at the firſt: A Learned Man gloſſes it thus: If any Man be Circumciſed, *ſcilicet, eo animo,* out of ſuch a conceit as the falſe Teachers had taken up about it, or for ſuch an end, as they preached it up with reference thereunto, he is a Debtor to do the whole Law. *Vide Calvin. in loc.*

Secondly, Suppoſe it be granted, that Circumciſion was taken in, and inſerted into the Law, as given at Mount *Sinai*, yet it cannot be proved from thence, that it did oblige to keep the whole Law, and much leſs that it did belong to the Moſaical Oeconomy, no leſs than any other part of the Law did.

Thirdly, That tho Circumciſion was meerly the Token of the Covenant of Grace, and had no place at all in the Moſaical Oeconomy, yet the ſubmitting unto it under the New Teſtament, might bring Perſons under an Obligation to keep the whole Law, and that according to the intendment of God in giving of it: The Jews were obliged by the Covenant of Grace, to keep the Law according to the true uſe, and end of it; this is evident, *Deut.* 29. 9. compared with 25.

But then, Thirdly, The laſt Paſſage is that of the Apoſtle, in *Phil.* 3. Where boaſting in Circumciſion, is eſteemed a boaſting in the Fleſh; I ſhall only ſay, he that can prove from hence, that the Covenant of Circumciſion was the old Covenant, may prove *quidlibet è quolibet.* Certainly to boaſt in any holy Action, ſuppoſing the giving the Body to be burned for the ſake of Chriſt, would be but a boaſting in the Fleſh, and yet that will not prove that that is a legal, and no New Covenant

nant Duty; ſo that there is no Paſſage, at leaſt that is as yet produced, either out of the Old or New Teſtament, will prove that Circumciſion did at all belong to the Moſaical Oeconomy.

But Secondly, This I would offer, that tho Circumciſion by reaſon of ſomewhat in it that was Ceremonial, or Typical, might be inſerted in the Law; yet it will not follow from thence, that it was not at the firſt Inſtitution of God, and ſo continued under that Adminiſtration: the Token of the Covenant of Grace it might be, and continue to be the Token of the Covenant of Grace, tho after, as having ſomething of a Ceremonial Nature in it, it was inſerted in the old Covenant, and thereupon aboliſhed at the ceaſing of that Adminiſtration.

There is yet one Paſſage more, that I met with in the Diſcourſe, that apparently carries on the ſame Deſign, with all thoſe hitherto taken notice of; and that we have *pag.* 123. and it is this, *That* Levi *payed Tithes in* Abraham. But now, this Mr. *C.* himſelf ſeems to lay little weight upon, and he had a great deal of reaſon for it, ſeeing that paying of Tithes by *Levi* in *Abraham* was before the eſtabliſhment of this Covenant, and therefore could not poſſibly be by virtue of it. But Mr. *C.* laying himſelf ſo little ſtreſs upon this, I ſhall not inſiſt upon it; and that ſhall ſuffice for the firſt Branch of our ſecond Propoſition.

And I ſhall proceed to the ſecond Branch.

Secondly, That the Covenant mentioned (*Gen.* 17. 7.) is the Covenant of Grace, that very Covenant according unto which all the Elect always have been, ſtill are, and ſhall be ſaved. Now this hath been afore proved. See *Infant-Baptiſm*

from Heaven, Book 1. pag. 181. to 195. As alſo *Infant-Baptiſm plainly proved*, pag. 46, 47. where the Reader will find theſe two Poſitions laid down and proved.

Firſt, That this was a Covenant of Grace.

Secondly, That it is the Covenant of Grace under which Believers now are.

The former of theſe Poſitions was proved by four Arguments, the latter by two. The ſecond of the four former, was taken from the ſubject matter of the main Promiſe of the Covenant, and that is, that God would be a God to *Abraham*, and his Seed in their Generations. Now this Good (the ſubject matter of this Promiſe) being a Spiritual Good, (as was there ſhewed) can only be conveyed by the Covenant of Grace, and conſequently this Covenant muſt needs be the Covenant of Grace.

Now I find Mr. *C.* is otherwiſe minded. Thus in his 142, 143, 144, & 145. *pages*, where he enquires what that Good and Bleſſing is, which by this Covenant was enſured to the Seed of *Abraham* mentioned in this Covenant? tho he denies not that this Good, *viz.* for a People, or Perſon, to have God engaged by Promiſe to be a God unto them, is a Spiritual Good; yet he conceives there is no particular Good enſured by that Promiſe, only that by it a general aſſurance is given, that the Promiſes of the Covenant, whereunto it is annexed, ſhall not fail on God's part. And for the further ſatisfying his Reader, that this is the true import of, and as he ſuppoſeth the only thing intended in this Promiſe, he quotes a Paſſage out of my *Eſſay*, of that import; and hence he conceives this

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Promiſe may be, and anſwerably is annexed both to the Old and New Covenant: ſo *pag.* 145. In anſwer wherunto, I ſhall ſay in the general, that I ſhall not contend with any, whether this Promiſe may or may not be annexed to the Old or New Teſtament; and therefore ſhall not examine the Scriptures quoted by him to prove that it may, whether they make to his Purpoſe, or no. The Queſtion is only, Whether when this Promiſe is an eſſential, or conſtitutive part of any Covenant, as it was undoubtedly of this, that Covenant can be any other, than the Covenant of Grace? Now that I deny; and on the contrary affirm, that it muſt neceſſarily be a Covenant of Grace; and that for the reaſon before given; and for further clearing up, and evincing this, I ſhall offer two things.

1ſt, That when it is an eſſential or conſtitutive part of any Covenant, it doth conſtitute a mutual Relation between God and the Parties with whom the Covenant is made. So much I have affirmed in the place cited by him; ſo that he cites only a part of what I there affirmed. Tho its true, ſuppoſing this Promiſe did give only ſuch a general Aſſurance as Mr. *C.* ſpeaks of, it might have been indifferently annexed to the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace: but ſeeing it not only gives that Aſſurance, but alſo conſtitutes ſuch a mutual Relation betwixt God and Man, it cannot poſſibly be made an eſſential or conſtitutive part of the Covenant of Works. The Covenant of Works neither doth, nor can conſtitute ſuch a mutual Relation between God and Man. To have an Intereſt and

Propriety in God, as their God, is a greater Good than can be conveyed to any of the Sons of Men, as in their faln and corrupted Eſtate, by a Covenant of Works. There is a vaſt difference between Men's having all the Attributes of God ingaged to make good a particular Promiſe by virtue of his Truth and Faithfulneſs in his Promiſes, and a Man's having a perſonal particular Intereſt in God as his God, and conſequently having an Intereſt in all the Perfections of his Nature, as Mr. *C.* himſelf acknowledgeth is conveyed by this Promiſe. The former an Heathen may have, as in *Nebuchadnezzar*'s caſe, when God had promiſed him, as a Reward for the Service done againſt *Tyrus*, *Ezek.* 29. 18. The latter is peculiar to thoſe that ſtand in a New-Covenant-Relation unto God. Hence this Promiſe is never made, but it doth conſtitute or ſuppoſe a new Covenant-Relation between God and the Party to whom it is made.

2*dly*, That tho that God might lay in (to uſe our Authors words) all his Divine Perfections as Pledges, that the Promiſe of any Covenant (as it may poſſibly be entred) ſhall not fail on his part, yet it is impoſſible that he ſhould ſo lay in his Attributes, or Divine Perfections, as Pledges that the Promiſes of this Covenant (were it a Covenant of Works) ſhould not fail on his part; the Tenour of this Covenant renders that impoſſible. Seeing then he ſhould have laid in his Attributes as Pledges that thoſe Promiſes ſhould not fail on his part; which in reſpect of many thouſands of thoſe to whom they were made, he never intended to,

nor

nor did make them good: See my firſt Book *pag.* 181. So that we may ſee how little our Opponent's Cauſe is advantaged by what I have ſaid, and anſwerably that as that, ſo all the other three Arguments urged for the proving this Covenant to be a Covenant of Grace, yet abide in their full force; and upon Suppoſition of the Truth of this former Poſition, the ſecond will be more eaſily granted. Hence I uſed only two Arguments to prove it, both which were drawn from the Diſcourſe of the Apoſtle (*Gal.* 3. 16, 17, 29.) and they are both grounded upon this Suppoſition, that the Covenant the Apoſtle there ſpeaks of, and hath reference unto, is this Covenant recorded (*Gen.* 17.7.) which I proved by the Tenour of the Promiſe conſtituting the Covenant, ſaid by the Apoſtle to be confirmed in Chriſt. The Promiſe was to *Abraham* and his Seed; ſo that the Covenant made with *Abraham*, the Promiſes of which are to his Seed, or run in this Tenour, *To thee, and to thy Seed*, that muſt needs be the Covenant the Apoſtle hath reference unto; and conſequently, muſt neceſſarily be the Covenant of Grace, under which Believers now are. And that this Covenant (recorded *Gen.* 17. 7.) muſt neceſſarily be this Covenant, I prove, becauſe there is no other Covenant made with *Abraham*, that the Apoſtle can poſſibly intend; the Promiſes of which are expreſt in thoſe Terms, or run in that Tenour. Now theſe things being ſo plain, and carrying ſuch convincing Evidence along with them, it may ſeem exceeding ſtrange how they can be gainſaid by any. Yet Mr. *Cox* denies that that is the Covenant the Apoſtle hath reference

reference to, and to evade this ſo plain and demonſtrative Evidence that it is, he doth two things:

Firſt, He inſinuates that ſome of thoſe Promiſes that ultimately reſpect *Abraham*'s Spiritual Seed, and Spiritual Bleſſings, were ſometimes given to *Abraham* under the covert of thoſe Terms that have an immediate reſpect unto his Natural Seed and Temporal Bleſſings, as made Types of the other, and when they are ſo, the Promiſe ſtill runs to his Seed in the ſingular Number. Now to this in general, I muſt ſay, (neither am I careful what Cenſures I may fall under thereby) a ſtranger Evaſion of any Scripture-Argument, rarely if ever occurs in any of thoſe Polemical Treatiſes that are extant in the World. And I cannot but wonder, that Mr. *C.* would commit ſuch an Evaſion to writing, ſeeing *litera ſcripta manet.* I ſhall not anatomize it (as I might do) without a further Call, but more particularly, I ſhall ſay only two things at preſent.

1. That the thing inſinuated, is utterly falſe; there are no ſuch Promiſes (as thoſe Mr. *C.* ſpeaks of) given to *Abraham*, that did not appertain to the Covenant of Grace: Let any one Inſtance be produced.

2. I ſay, were this true, yet the Inference drawn therefrom, is nothing to the purpoſe, ſeeing the Queſtion is not, whether the Promiſe is made to *Abraham*'s Seed, both Natural and Spiritual, or Myſtical, in one and the ſame Tenour; That's nothing to the preſent purpoſe, whether it be or not; the only Queſtion is, Whether the Promiſe

miſe (*Gen.* 17. 7.) be the Promiſe the Apoſtle here refers unto; which that it is, in this his Evaſion Mr. *C.* denies not, but rather grants that it is, and that is all that at preſent is contended for. Let that be granted, it will undoubtedly follow, that that Covenant (one conſtitutive part of which that Promiſe is) is the Covenant of Grace, ſeeing the Apoſtle in the very next Verſe aſſures us it was the Covenant confirmed in Chriſt 430 Years before the Law was given; for having ſaid, Verſe 15, *That tho it be but a Man's Covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no Man diſanulleth, or addeth thereto*; he ſubjoins (ver. 16.) *Now to* Abraham *and his Seed were the Promiſes made*; it is all one, as if he ſhould ſay, now with *Abraham* and his Seed was the Covenant made. For the Promiſes in this 16*th* Verſe, and Covenant both in the foregoing and following Verſes, are convertible or ſynonimous Terms, intending one and the ſame thing. And then for the Proof of what he deſigned to prove he expreſſeth the Tenour of the Covenant made with, or Promiſes made to *Abraham* and his Seed, it was made with, or they were made to him and his Seed; not with or to *Abraham* and his Seeds, but with or to him and his Seed; whence the Covenant or Promiſes expreſt or running in that Tenour, muſt neceſſarily be the Covenant or Promiſes here intended; but that was the Covenant, or thoſe were the Promiſes recorded *Gen.* 17. 7. And then the Apoſtle immediately adds in Verſe 17. *The Covenant which was confirmed before of God in Chriſt, the Law which was* 430 *Years after cannot diſanul.* Now can it poſſibly be imagined that the Apoſtle ſhould intend

tend any other Promiſe or Covenant than thoſe, or that juſt before recited? How abſurd, and utterly unreaſonable would it be ſo to do? So that that is the Covenant, the Apoſtle muſt neceſſarily, paſt all rational Suppoſition, have reference unto. Indeed that which Mr. *C.* would ſeem to inſinuate is this, That tho the Apoſtle may have reference to that Promiſe, *Gen.* 17. 7. yet it is ſo as only to recite the bare Words of it, but indeed intending another Covenant, and that of a quite different Nature from, and made long before this, the Words of which he recites. But then I would know, how we ſhall be ſure that either the Apoſtle, or other Pen-Men of the Holy Scriptures intend, according to the Letter of their Words in any other place of the Scriptures? But Mr. *C.* himſelf ſeems to be ſenſible of the inſufficiency of this Evaſion, and poſſibly, was not altogether inapprehenſive of the ill conſequence of avoiding ſuch plain Scripture as this would be, ſuppoſing it granted that the Apoſtle did recite the Words of that Promiſe.

Hence he attempts the Evaſion of this Evidence given, to what we affirm concerning the Covenant, by this Diſcourſe of the Apoſtle, another way. And ſo,

Secondly, He endeavours to perſwade his Reader, that the Promiſe given *Gen.* 17. was not the Promiſe, and conſequently the Covenant there eſtabliſhed with *Abraham*, was not the Covenant that the Apoſtle refers unto, but that it was the Promiſe made with *Abraham Gen.* 22. 18. Thus *pag.* 78. which the Apoſtle calls the Covenant, ſo he expreſſeth himſelf. Howbeit, I conceive the

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Apoſtle hath here a direct and ſpecial Eye to that Promiſe *Gen.* 22. 18. *In thy Seed ſhall all the Families of the Earth be bleſſed.* But then he foreſees (as well he might) that this Objection would ariſe in the Minds of Men, That whereas the Promiſe that the Apoſtle had reference unto, and intends, is expreſt in theſe Terms, and runs in this Tenour, *To thy Seed*, that Promiſe of *Gen.* 22. is only made concerning *Abraham*'s Seed, that Promiſe there is not, *To thee and to thy Seed*, but, *in thy Seed*; and conſequently, cannot be the Promiſe the Apoſtle here refers unto. Now let us ſee what anſwer can be given to this Objection. Why ſaith, Mr. *C. Let it be minded, that all the Promiſes made of this Seed*, viz. *Chriſt, in one reſpect, may be ſaid to be made to this Seed, in another, becauſe they are originally eſtabliſhed in the everlaſting Covenant of Redemption that was between the Father and the Son.* In anſwer whereunto it muſt be ſaid, that this is an Evaſion of a like import with the former, ſeeing it ſignifies nothing at all as to the preſent Purpoſe; for the Queſtion ſtill concerns not the ſence or meaning of the Promiſe, but is only what Promiſe the Apoſtle hath reference unto, and doth intend. And beſides, it doth imply that the Apoſtle may cite one Promiſe, and yet intend another. Hence, unleſs any Promiſe made to *Abraham* with reference to his Seed, expreſt in theſe Terms, To thy Seed, can be produced, we may, and neceſſarily muſt conclude, that it is the Promiſe of this Covenant that the Apoſtle hath a reference unto, and intends. By ſuch an anſwer as this, the plaineſt Scripture may eaſily be evaded. But ſurely when the Apoſtle expreſſeth th

the Promiſe he hath reference unto, and directly intends in the very Words and Tenour of the Promiſe, *Gen.* 17.7. and there being no other Promiſe recorded in Scripture, expreſt in the ſame Words, or running in the ſame Tenour, that he can poſſibly have reference unto, but only this; it will hardly be queſtioned, by any Man that is not reſolved *to turn away his Ears from him that ſpeaketh from Heaven*, whether that be the Promiſe referred unto, and intended by the Apoſtle, or no? This I ſhall be bold to ſay, that this one Teſtimony of the Apoſtle concerning this Covenant, will bear the weight laid upon it, will evince to the Judgment of all Men (whoſe Minds are not blinded with exceſs of Prejudice) the infallible certainty of the Covenant, (*Gen.* 17. 7.) its being the Covenant of Grace, let Men or Devils do their utmoſt to weaken it. From the whole, we ſee the ground of thoſe two Arguments lying firm, the Arguments bottomed thereupon are valid; and conſequently, thoſe ſix Arguments to prove this Covenant to be the Covenant of Grace, remain in their full force. Now then, before I proceed any further, I ſhall briefly recapitulate what Evidence we have from plain and expreſs Scripture, that this Covenant under conſideration is not the old Covenant, or Covenant of Works, but is indeed the Covenant of Grace. And

1. The Scripture poſitively thus affirms this to be a Covenant, *I will eſtabliſh my Covenant*, and *this is the Covenant* Mr. *C.* himſelf acknowledgeth to be a ſolemn Covenant.

2. The

2. The Scripture expreſly declares, that there was but one Covenant made with *Abraham*, wherein his Seed were taken in as joint Parties with himſelf.

3. The Scripture expreſly declares, that the old Covenant *was ordained by Angels in the Hand of a Mediator*, which this Covenant with *Abraham* was not.

4. The Scripture expreſly declares, that the old Covenant *was made* 430 *Years after the Covenant of Grace* eſtabliſhed with *Abraham*, but this Covenant was made with *Abraham* himſelf, and that within 40 Years after the very firſt Tranſactions of God with him in a Covenant-way.

5. The Scripture in expreſs Terms affirms, that the old Covenant was not made with either *Abraham*, *Iſaac* or *Jacob*. And,

Laſtly, The Apoſtle expreſly declares, that it was this Covenant (mentioned *Gen.* 17. 7.) that was *confirmed of God in Chriſt*, which all muſt, and will confeſs was the Covenant of Grace.

Now then, having thus demonſtrated the Truth of this ſecond Propoſition, both negatively and poſitively, by ſo many expreſs Scriptures, it ſeems utterly unneceſſary, that I ſhould add any thing more in the confirmation of it. And the Truth is, thoſe that after ſo much plain Scripture, will deny this to be the Covenant of Grace, and affirm it to be the old Covenant, ſeem to be Perſons rather to be pitied and prayed for, as under the higheſt efficacy of Error, than to be diſputed with: They will remain Inſtances to ſucceeding Generations, of Mens tenaciouſneſs of Error, when once taken up and entertained by them.

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Neither can it be judged unreaſonable tho I ſhould diſmiſs them with a like anſwer, with that of *Abraham*'s to *Dives*, They have *Moſes* and *Paul*, they have the Old and New Teſtament, let them hear them.

But yet, that I may give our Opponents full Meaſure, heaped up and running over, I ſhall add one Argument more, to prove that that Covenant is the Covenant of Grace; and it is this:

Arg. That Covenant, the being under, or taking hold of which, gave Perſons a Memberſhip, or a right to Memberſhip in the Jewiſh Church, or the Church of *Iſrael* after the Fleſh, was the Covenant of Grace; but it was the Covenant of Circumciſion, or that Covenant eſtabliſhed with *Abraham*, that the being under, or taking hold of which, gave Perſons a Memberſhip, or a Right to Memberſhip in that Church; therefore that Covenant was the Covenant of Grace. The *Minor* Propoſition I judg will meet with no Oppoſition. Mr. *C.* expreſly affirms, *That Circumciſion was the entrance into, and boundary of Communion in the Jewiſh Church*, ſo *pag.* 12. Hence it will, and muſt neceſſarily be granted, that all that had a Right to Circumciſion (which all that were under, or did take hold of that Covenant had) had a Memberſhip, or a Right to Memberſhip in that Church: and therefore not to ſpend time in the Proof of that, which neither can, nor will be denied, 'tis the *Major* Propoſition that only needs Proof. That then which I am to prove is this, *viz.* That that Covenant, the being under, or taking hold of which, did give Memberſhip, or a Right to Memberſhip, in the Jewiſh Church, was the Covenant

of

of Grace. And for the Proof of this, take theſe Arguments.

1. By that Covenant, as under, or taking hold of which, Perſons had a Memberſhip, or Right of Memberſhip in the Jewiſh Church, Jeſus Chriſt and they came to have, and had a mutual Intereſt and Propriety in each other; but it was by the Covenant of Grace, that Jeſus Chriſt, and any of the Children of Men, came to have, or have had a mutual Intereſt or Propriety in each other: therefore that Covenant muſt needs be the Covenant of Grace. For the *Major* Propoſition that is evident, paſt all rational Contradiction, by a twofold Conſideration:

1. That Jeſus Chriſt, and all thoſe that had a Memberſhip or Right of Memberſhip in the Jewiſh Church, had a mutual Intereſt and Propriety in each other. This is expreſly declared *Cant.*2.16. *My Beloved is mine, and I am his.* They are the Words of the Church, ſpeaking of her ſelf, in a collective Notion, as the Spouſe of Chriſt. Now whether we take this Song of *Solomon*'s as a Prophetical Hiſtory, or an Hiſtorical Propheſy, and ſo apply the ſeveral Paſſages, paſſing between Chriſt and his Church, to different periods of Time, or take it as applicable in the whole of it, to the Church indefinitely in all periods of Time; we muſt neceſſarily underſtand the Jewiſh Church, or Church under the firſt Teſtament, conſiſting of the natural Poſterity of *Abraham*, ſpeaking here unto Chriſt under the notion of a ſingle Perſon, as his Spouſe. Some that take this Song as a Prophetical Hiſtory, underſtand this as ſpoken by the Spouſe in *Nehemiah's* time;

however the Church under the Firſt-Teſtament-Adminiſtration cannot be excluded. Now ſaith ſhe, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his.* Here was a mutual Intereſt and Propriety that Chriſt and that Church had one in the other; and what the Church here ſpeaks of this mutual Intereſt and Propriety that Jeſus Chriſt and ſhe had in each other, may be ſpoken of, or by every particular Member. So that whoſoever, by being under, or taking hold of the Covenant, were Members of the Jewiſh Church, Chriſt and they had a mutual Intereſt and Propriety in each other: Chriſt was theirs, and they were his. Whoſoever were indeed and in truth under, or had indeed and in truth taken hold of the Covenant, Chriſt and they had a mutual Intereſt and Propriety in each other, *in Foro Dei*; ſo whoſoever were viſibly under, or did viſibly take hold of the Covenant, Chriſt and they had a mutual Intereſt and Propriety in each other, *in Foro Eccleſiæ.*

2. That it was by that Covenant, as under, or as taking hold of which, Perſons had a Memberſhip, or a Right of Memberſhip in the Jewiſh Church, that Chriſt and they came to have a mutual Intereſt and Propriety in each other. This is evident, ſeeing it muſt be by ſome Covenant that Jeſus Chriſt and the Jewiſh Church collectively taken, and conſequently the particular Members of it came to have that mutual Intereſt and Propriety in each other: and what Covenant can it poſſibly be imagined to be, but that as under, or taking hold of which they came to be a Church, or to have a Memberſhip therein: So that the *Major* Propoſition ſtands firm.

2. For

2. For the *Minor, viz.* That it was by the Covenant of Grace, that Jeſus Chriſt and they came to have a mutual Intereſt and Propriety in each other. This is ſo plain throughout the Scriptures, that it's hardly to be ſuppoſed it ſhould be gainſaid by any that own the Scriptures to be of Divine Original. It muſt either be by the old Covenant, or the Covenant of Grace; but it could not be by the old Covenant, and that for a double Reaſon:

1. Becauſe the very Deſign of the old Covenant was only to lead Men unto Chriſt. It was (as the Apoſtle expreſly declares, *Gal.* 3. 24.) *A Schoolmaſter to bring Men unto Chriſt.* By it none ever had, nor could have an Intereſt and Propriety in him.

2. Becauſe could Chriſt and Men come to have had a mutual Intereſt and Propriety in each other, by the Law, or by the old Covenant, the Covenant of Grace had been unneceſſary. So much the Apoſtle plainly implies, *Heb.*8.v.7. compared with 10. Hence it muſt neceſſarily be by the Covenant of Grace. Now both the Propoſitions being true, the Conſequent is undeniable.

Arg. 2. If it were the failing in, or non-performance of the Covenant of Grace, that did forfeit or diſanul their Membership in the Jewiſh Church, who were actual Members of it; then it was the Covenant of Grace, that their being under, or taking hold of which, did give them Membership, or Right of Membership, in that Church: But the former is true, therefore the latter.

For the Conſequent in the *Major* Propoſition, that carries its own Evidence along with it. It muſt neceſſarily be the ſame Covenant, that the failing in, or the non-performance of the Conditions of which, they did forfeit or diſanul their Memberſhip, that their being under, or taking hold of which that did give them a Memberſhip, or a Right of Memberſhip in that Church: their continuance to have performed the Conditions of that Covenant, through their being under, or taking hold of which, they came to have a Memberſhip in that Church, would have continued their Memberſhip therein; and the failing or non-performance of the Conditions of any other Covenant, could not have forfeited or diſanulled that their Memberſhip. So that look what Covenant it was, that the failing in, or the non-performance of the Conditions of which, did forfeit or diſanul their Memberſhip in that Church, muſt undoubtedly be the Covenant, that through their being under, or taking hold of which, they firſt came to have a Memberſhip therein.

This is too plain then to admit of a Denial: Therefore.

2. For the *Minor* Propoſition, *viz.* That it was their failing in, or non-performance of the Conditions of the Covenant of Grace, that did forfeit or diſanul their Memberſhip in that Church, who before were Members of it. This is expreſly affirmed by the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 11. 25. It was their Unbelief, that did forfeit and diſanul their Memberſhip in that Church: *They were broken off, becauſe of their Unbelief.* And that Unbelief is Man's failure in, or non-performance of

of the great Condition of the Covenant of Grace, is unqueſtionable.

Now I would willingly know, what Mr. *C.* or any others, who are like-minded with him as to the nature of the Covenant, do judg the Jews through their Unbelief where broken off from. I conceive, they muſt either ſay, it was *Abraham*, or the viſible Church; ſeeing there is no breaking off from the inviſible Church. If they ſay it was *Abraham*, as the Root of that Nation they were broken off from, then the meaning muſt be that through their Unbelief, their Relation unto *Abraham* as his Children was diſſolved; their natural Relation it could not be: hence it will neceſſarily follow, that hitherto reſpective to the Covenant, they had only ſtood in that Relation of Children unto *Abraham* through Faith, *viz.* that Faith required under that firſt Adminiſtration. But that will utterly overthrow their own Suppoſition, *viz.* That the Jews ſtood in their Relation to *Abraham* as his Children, meerly by virtue of their Natural Deſcent from him, and will fully prove what I have elſewhere affirmed, of which more by and by.

If they ſay it was the viſible Church which they were broken off from, (which is the thing that we affirm) then they muſt either ſay, that their Church was the only viſible Church, or it was part of the viſible Church. Let them ſay which they pleaſe, it comes all to one, ſeeing it was the ſame Covenant as under, or by taking hold of which, they were, or came to be Members of that particular Church, and Members of the Univerſal Viſible Church. Now, it was the Cove-

nant of Grace, that by their being under, or taking hold of which, they were of the Viſible Church, ſeeing it was by the failing in, and non-performance of the Conditions of that Covenant that they were broken off: and that was (as before is proved) the Covenant of Circumciſion; therefore that muſt needs be the Covenant of Grace.

Arg. 3. That Covenant as under, or by virtue of which, the Jews had the Oracles of God committed to them, was the Covenant of Grace: but it was the Covenant of Circumciſion, or that Covenant eſtabliſhed, *Gen.* 17. 7. that, as under, or by virtue of which, the Jews had the Oracles of God committed to them; therefore that Covenant is the Covenant of Grace.

The *Minor* Propoſition is expreſly affirmed by Mr. *C.* himſelf, and therefore is ſecure from any Oppoſition from him: See *Pag.* 122. *Sect.* 7. As for the *Major* Propoſition, as previous to the Proof of that, let it be obſerved, That by the Oracles of God, we are to underſtand chiefly and primarily, the Word of God, whether only as written or preached: 1 *Pet.* 4. 10. Tho we exclude not any other Means whereby God communicates his Will unto Men: Yet, I ſay, the Word of God is chiefly and primarily intended. Now that the Jews had the Word of God committed unto, and entruſted with them, as under, or by virtue of the Covenant of Grace, is evident; becauſe the Vouchſafement of this Priviledg, as neceſſarily implied and included in thoſe Promiſes, that do undeniably appertain, and muſt be referred to the Covenant of Grace: As for Inſtance,

ſtance, that Promiſe in *Deut.* 30. 6. where the Lord promiſeth *to circumciſe their Hearts*. That that Promiſe is to be referred to the Covenant of Grace, will not, I ſuppoſe, be denied. Now in the Promiſe the outward Means, which are eminently the Word of God, whereby God doth in an ordinary Way, effect the Good promiſed, is included and implied. See my *Eſſay*, p. 85.

Arg. 4. If the Jewiſh Church were a Spiritual, and not a Carnal, or a mere Typical Church, then the Covenant it was built upon, or the being under, or taking hold of which, gave a Memberſhip, or a Right of Memberſhip in it, was the Covenant of Grace: but the former is true, therefore the latter. The Conſequent in the Major Propoſition needs no Proof: and for the Minor, that the Jewiſh Church was a Spiritual, and not a mere Carnal or Typical Church, is evident theſe three ways: Only I ſhall premiſe this, that it is readily granted, that that Church, at leaſt in moſt Ages, was too carnal; many of them were wholly Strangers to Regeneration and true Piety; and the major part, even of thoſe that were truly Godly, yet had but a lower meaſure of Grace: they had Spiritual Life, but it was in a lower degree, and ſo in a ſenſe, may be ſaid to have been a Carnal Church, that is, comparatively they were ſo.

Thus the Church at *Corinth* is ſaid to be *carnal*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 3, 4. So much ſhall be readily granted; but that that Church by Divine Conſtitution, was to be, and anſwerably at the firſt Plantation of it was, a truly Spiritual Church; that is, a Church conſiſting of ſuch as were truly Godly, according

to the Meaſure of Grace then given. See for this my Anſwer to Mr. *Danver*'s p. 102, 103. And after, throughout all Ages, there were ſo many among them true Saints, as that that Church in general, might be denominated a Spiritual Church, in the ſame ſenſe in which the Church at *Corinth*, or any other New-Teſtament-Church may be ſo called; and this, I ſay, is evident theſe three ways.

Firſt, 'Tis evident from the Relation conſtituted between God and it, as a collective Body: as for Inſtance;

1. He was a Father to it, and it his Child. Sometimes it is called his Son: ſo *Jer.* 31. 9. *Hoſ.* 11. 1. Sometimes his Daughter, ſo in *Pſal.* 45. 10.

2. God was a Husband to that Church, and it (as collectively conſidered) his Spouſe. *Jer.* 31. 32. Hence the Entrance or Renovation of the Covenant between God and that Church, is called her Eſpouſals. Now, can it be ſuppoſed, that God would take a mere Carnal Church, that is, a Company of ungodly and unholy Perſons, into ſuch nigh Relation to himſelf?

2dly. What we affirm, is evident from the ſpecial Love that God bare unto that Church. She is called *his Beloved*, Iſa. 5. 1. Jer. 11. 15. *The dearly Beloved of his Soul*, Jer. 12. 7. So how many Titles doth our Lord Chriſt give his Church, in the Book of *Canticles*, from which that Church cannot be excluded? importing the ſpecialty, yea the ſtrength of his Love to it; 'tis needleſs to mention them. Now, would an infinitely holy God bear ſuch a Love to an unholy and ungodly Aſſociation of Men?

3dly. (To

3dly. (To add no more.) It is evident from the conſtant Deſign of all the Prophets, to bring up that Church to the Power of Godlineſs in caſe of their Degeneracy therefrom. But not to enlarge, at preſent, I ſhall only add, that it ſeems to me to argue very low and carnal Conceptions of God and Jeſus Chriſt, to talk of his Church as being for many Generations a meer carnal Church.

As a Cloſe of this, we may remark how greatly Mr. *C.* is miſtaken in his Hiſtorical Account of God's federal Tranſactions with *Abraham*. In brief, the Hiſtory lies plainly thus. When *Abraham* was in *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, ſerving other Gods, (as *Joſhua* ſpeaks) God of his own free Grace, in a purſuance of his eternal Purpoſes concerning him, appears to him, and calls him out of his own Country, to go into a Land that he would ſhew him; and for his Encouragement ſo to do, makes thoſe Promiſes, *Gen.* 12. 2, 3. whereby he prepares the Way to, but doth not then enter his Covenant with him: Hereupon *Terah*, *Abraham*'s Father, takes *Abraham*, and *Lot* his Grandchild by *Haran*, and they with *Abraham*'s Wife go into *Canaan*, in order to their paſſing on unto that Land God had called *Abraham* unto: Here they ſtay for ſome conſiderable Time, how long we cannot determine: But there *Terah*, *Abraham*'s Father, dies: after which *Abraham* and *Lot* (whether upon a new Call or no, is not certain) come into *Canaan*, and immediately upon their coming into that Land, the Lord appears to *Abraham*, and tells him expreſly, that was the Land he had promiſed to ſhew him: Thus in *Gen.* 12. 6. About nine

nine or ten Years after this, the Lord appears to him again, and ſettles this Land upon his Poſterity by Covenant, yet not to be poſſeſſed by them till the fourth Generation: ſo in *Gen.* 15. latter end. Whether this Covenant was the ſame with that after eſtabliſhed (as ſome think) I ſhall not determine: But about fifteen Years after this, when *Abraham* was ninety and nine Years old, the Lord appears to him again, and both conſtitutes him the Father of the Faithful, and thereupon changes his Name from *Abram* to *Abraham*, and now as the Father of the Faithful, as well as of a natural Seed, eſtabliſheth the Covenant of Grace with him and his Seed in their Generations, and ordains an outward Token, which he and his Seed were to keep in their Generations. And then laſtly, about ſix and twenty Years after this, the Lord appears to *Abraham* again, and as before he had confirmed this Covenant in Chriſt more implicitely, ſo now more expreſly, *In thy Seed* (meaning principally Jeſus Chriſt) *ſhall all the Families of the Earth be bleſſed*, Gen. 22. 18. And this was the laſt time that we read of, that God dealt with *Abraham* in a way of federal Tranſactions. This being noted, I return and come to the third Propſition.

Prop. 3. That under that Term [Seed] in the Promiſe, *Abraham*'s natural Seed, (namely thoſe proceeding immediately from his own Loins) were included and primarily intended. This I need not inſiſt upon, having ſufficiently proved it formerly. See *Infant Baptiſm from Heaven*, *Book* 1. *pag.* 19. to 32. Neither doth Mr. *C.* abſolutely deny it; in his 120 *pag.* ſaith he, *We exclude*

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not the immediate Seed, meaning of *Abraham*: only he diſſents from me in this (which alſo ſome *Pædo-Baptiſts* do;) he thinks only *Iſaac* was intended, but that *Iſhmael* and *Abraham*'s other Children by *Keturah* were excluded.

Anſw. But be it ſo, I ſee not how either the Cauſe of *Anti pædo Baptiſm* is much advantaged, nor the Cauſe of *Pædo-Baptiſm* prejudiced, thereby; unleſs it could be proved therefrom that this Covenant was the old Covenant, and not the Covenant of Grace; which I ſhall not ſo much as ſuppoſe that Mr. *C.* deſigns: Certainly to any conſidering Man it rather proves the quite contrary. But (ſaith Mr. *C.*) *We make a Believer's Intereſt in this Covenant, of larger Extent than ever* Abraham's *was, ſeeing* (as he ſuppoſes) *only* Iſaac *was a joint Confederate with* Abraham; *but we make all the Seed of Believers Confederate with their Parents.* Thus *p.* 131.

To which I anſwer: Suppoſing it ſhould be granted, (which yet I am far from doing;) that only *Iſaac* was included with *Abraham* in this Covenant, that would not at all weaken the claim we ground upon the Extent of this Covenant, to the Covenant-Intereſt of all the Seed of Believers: and the Reaſon is obvious, *viz.* Becauſe the Promiſe runs in indefinite Terms, which are equivolent to univerſal; *I will be a God to thee and thy Seed in their Generations.* Now ſuppoſing we are to underſtand that Phraſe, *in their Generations*, as extending the Covenant to, and taking in the natural Seed of *Abraham*'s Seed, *viz.* Believers; (as I have elſewhere proved that we are to do, and of which more immediately.) Hence tho God, who knew his own Eternal Decrees, ſhould have

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for ſome ſpecial Reaſons, by expreſs Revelation excluded all *Abraham*'s immediate Children, excepting *Iſaac*, from an Intereſt in the Promiſes, and done the like alſo in reſpect of *Iſaac*'s Children; yet after when no ſuch excluſion was made by any immediate Revelation from God, the Promiſe was and is to be underſtood in the full Latitude in which it is expreſt, and anſwerably it ſo was underſtood in all ſucceeding Generations. God may exclude whom he will from his Promiſes by immediate Revelation, but when no ſuch Revelation is made, we are to interpret the Promiſe and Practice thereupon, according to the true and proper Sence of the Terms it is expreſſed in. But

2. I abſolutely deny that God did then exclude either *Iſhmael*, or any other of *Abraham*'s immediate Children; and affirm on the other hand that they were all (one as well as another) included and intended in that Term *Seed*. And this I have (as I conceive) undeniably proved in the place before referred unto. It is true, Mr. *C.* hath ſeen meet to call thoſe Arguments Conjectures. To which I ſhall only ſay, if he ſees meet to engage any further in this Controverſy, will he but ſhew their invalidity, let them then bear that Denomination; till then I ſhall preſume to call them irrefragable Arguments.

But let us ſee, what ground Mr. *C.* has to ſuppoſe the Promiſes were limited to *Iſaac*; and it is this: *Their Extent* (ſaith he) *was reſtrained by the expreſs Caution of God himſelf*; referring us to *Gen.* 17. 19, 20, 21, with *Gen.* 21. 12.

To

To this I anſwer, That the one or the other of theſe Scriptures, are far from reſtraining the Promiſes at the firſt making of them to *Iſaac* alone: See *Infant Baptiſm from Heaven*, *Book* 1. *p.* 37. The Lord doth not ſay that he had eſtabliſhed his Covenant only with *Iſaac*, indeed *Iſaac* was not then born: nor doth he ſay, that when he promiſed to be a God to *Abraham* and his Seed, he only intended *Iſaac*; but he ſpeaks with reference to the Time future: *I will eſtabliſh my Covenant with him* (ſpeaking of *Iſaac*) *for an everlaſting Covenant*: So, *In* Iſaac *thy Seed ſhall be called.* The plain meaning is, that this Covenant ſhould be, and we may add, ſhould only be, continued in *Iſaac*'s Line, who was made ſubordinately a Father of the Faithful with *Abraham*: And as theſe Texts will bear this Sence, ſo the Arguments referred unto, do evidently prove they muſt be ſo underſtood. And therefore till thoſe Arguments are better anſwered, than by an inſipid Inſinuation, that they are but Conjectures; I ſhall ſurceaſe any further reply, and conclude, that altho the Covenant was continued only in *Iſaac*'s Line, yet at the firſt Eſtabliſhment of it, it did include all *Abraham*'s natural Seed, immediately proceeding from him: And proceed to the laſt Propoſition, which is this:

Vid. Rivet. Vitab. Calv. in loc.

Prop. 4. That this Covenant, with the Promiſes of it, conſidered definitely, did extend to, and include only *Abraham*'s immediate Seed. The meaning of this Propoſition is this, that as this Covenant did only conſtitute an actual Covenant-Relation between God and *Abraham*, and his Chil-

Children immediately deſcending from him, with ſuch others as were ſo incorporated into his Family, as that they were properly his own, and he had a full Right and Power to diſpoſe of them as his own: So the Promiſes of it did only appertain to them ſo, as that they ſeverally and particularly conſidered, had a preſent actual Right to, and could make for themſelves a particular Claim to the Good promiſed.

I eaſily grant, that the Promiſes of this Covenant had a more general reſpect to *Abraham*'s natural Seed in after-Generations; but I ſay, it did not conſtitute an actual Covenant-Relation between God and any of them in particular, beyond thoſe immediately deſcended from him, ſo as they, merely as his Seed, had a preſent actual Right to the Good contained in the Promiſes of it. This I have proved by ſix Arguments: See *Infant Baptiſm plainly proved*, pag. 19. to the 26. But Mr. *Cox* over-looking all thoſe Arguments, and thereby leaving his Reader at an uncertainty, whether they are demonſtrative or no, hath aſſerted the quite contrary; ſo *pag.* 117. His Words are: *The immediate and remote Seed of that Line, to which the Promiſes of the Covenant of Circumciſion did belong, were as fully included, and intereſted in them as the immediate Seed.* Yet whether he do differ from me ſo much as his Words ſeem to import, to me is utterly uncertain. His Words ſeem plainly to aſſert, That the Promiſes of the Covenant did equally and alike appertain to all *Abraham*'s natural Poſterity, deſcended in the Line of *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, and that when adult, as well as while in their Infancy, as they did to his

his Seed immediately deſcended from his own Loins: And yet elſewhere he ſeemeth to hold, that this Covenant was a conditional Covenant; which if ſo, it is impoſſible the Promiſes of it ſhould appertain to any of *Abraham*'s natural Poſterity, beyond their pure Infant-State, merely as his Seed. So that how far Mr. *C.* agrees, and how far he differs from me, I cannot poſitively determine; and therefore ſhall only ſay in the general, in caſe he thinks all the mediate and remote Seed of *Abraham*, and that when grown up, as well as during their Infant-State, where as fully included and intereſted in the Promiſes of this Covenant, as his immediate Seed were, I ſhall refer him to the Arguments already offered to prove the contrary; judging it utterly unneceſſary to add any more, till thoſe are ſatisfactorily anſwered. But if he thinks it was only during their Infant-ſtate, that they were as fully included and intereſted in the Promiſes as *Iſaac* was, I would over and above thoſe Arguments, deſire him ſeriouſly to conſider, to what end or purpoſe that Covenant, ſuppoſe it were (as he fancies it was) the Old Covenant, ſhould be extended, ſo as to include all, yea, or any of *Abraham*'s remote Poſterity. Alas! What was the Good or Benefit they enjoyed thereby? eſpecially ſuch as died in their Infancy, or were born in any Forreign Land. I judg he will not be able to aſſign any ſuch Good or Benefit, as that himſelf will think God would lay in all his Divine Perfections as Pledges, that the Promiſes of it ſhould not fail on his part. But however, let us ſee what he hath ſaid in Confirmation of this his Aſſertion: And thus,

1. He

1. He thinks the Truth of it ſufficiently appears in the expreſs Terms of the Promiſes; ſo in the Page laſt cited. Yea, he thinks, and is bold to ſay, that in ſpecial this Phraſe, *Thy Seed in their Generations*, will admit no other Senſe. To which I ſhall ſay, He knows there is another Senſe given of that Phraſe, which he hath not made any Attempt to diſprove, nor ſhew why it may not be admitted, as well as this himſelf gives; yea, he knows that it is by ſeveral Arguments proved, that it cannot poſſibly admit of the Senſe now given of it by him. And therefore, inſtead of any other Anſwer to this, I ſhall only ſay, That ſuch Confidence without any Ground (as far as yet appears) to me is unaccountable. But,

2. He attempts to prove his Aſſertion by this Reaſon, *viz.* Becauſe the immediate Seed of thoſe Iſraelites that fell in the Wilderneſs, under the Diſpleaſure of God, were made to inherit the Land of *Canaan*, by virtue of this Covenant with *Abraham*, who otherwiſe could never have enjoyed it by virtue of the Stedfaſtneſs of their immediate Parents in the Covenant. To which I ſay three things:

1. Should I deny that there were any ſuch Infants, whoſe Parents, at leaſt both of them, fell in the Wilderneſs, who were made to inherit the Land of *Canaan*: He would, I judg, find it a hard Task, to prove that there were any ſuch, and then this Reaſon immediately falls to the Ground.

2. Suppoſe there were any ſuch Infants as he ſpeaks of; yet it's unimaginable that they ſhould be left to the wide World, and ſhould not be taken

taken up, and incorporated into ſome other Family. But,

3. Suppoſe we ſhould grant they were not incorporared into any other Family, but were carried into *Canaan* by ſome body, whoſe Children either as deſcended from, or adopted by them, they could not be accounted to be, yet they might have a Right to the Land of *Canaan* by virtue of their own immediate Parents Intereſts, though not Stedfaſtneſs in the Covenant.

I ſuppoſe Mr. *Cox* will not imagin that all that fell in the Wilderneſs under the Diſpleaſure of God, did forfeit their Covenant-ſtate. So that it muſt be ſaid, that this is a very feeble, yea, reaſonleſs Reaſon, to prove, that *Abraham*'s Covenant did extend to, and include his remote as well as his immediate Seed.

3. Mr. *Cox*, hath one Reaſon more, *viz.* Becauſe when the *Iſraelites* fell into groſs Idolatry, yet God claims an Intereſt in their Children; which he ſuppoſes muſt needs be by virtue of this Covenant made with *Abraham*; becauſe he thinks it will not be denied, but groſs Idolatry was a manifeſt Breach of the Covenant; ſo *pag.* 118. To which I anſwer, That tho it be not denied that groſs Idolatry is a manifeſt Breach of the Covenant, yet all groſs Idolatry doth not immediately diſſolve the Covenant-Relation between God and his People. Adultery and Murder are as manifeſt Breaches of the Covenant as Idolatry, and yet *David*'s Sins of that nature, did not diſſolve the Covenant-Relation betwen God and him. God always doth,

but in thoſe times more eſpecially, did bear with his People for a while in their Sins, tho very groſs, uſing the means to bring them to Repentance; and that was the Caſe of the People of *Iſrael* at the time referred unto by Mr. *Cox*. God was then dealing with them by his Prophets to bring them to Repentance, and deſigned to try another Means, *viz.* by delivering them into the hands of the *Babylonians*; which did effectually reduce them from that Sin; ſo that notwithſtanding their Idolatry, God did yet own them for his Covenant-People; and anſwerably might and did claim an Intereſt in their Children, not by virtue of their Relation to *Abraham*, but as the Children of the Covenant, tho greatly degenerate Parents. But now after, when through Unbelief, their Covenant-Relation was diſſolved, God caſt off both Parents and Children.

As for what is added out of the Apochrypha in Confirmation of this Reaſon, its Inſignificancy excuſes from any Conſideration of it.

He needed not to have ſhewn us the Senſe of the Jews, concerning the Covenant-Intereſt of Parents or Children, out of the Apochrypha, the Holy Scriptures fully declare and confute their groſs Miſtakes about it. But the Frivolouſneſs of our Author's Reaſons being detected, I ſhall at leaſt (till the Invalidity of the Arguments I have urged be ſhown, which I expect *ad Græcas Calendas*) conclude, that whatever the Senſe of the Jews, or any others that eſpouſe their Defence, was or is; yet indeed that Covenant eſtabliſhed with *Abraham* and his Seed in their Generations, did (as the Promiſes of it

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are to be underſtood definitely) only reach to, and include *Abraham*'s immediate Seed; and ſhall add, that in the ſame Latitude, and with the ſome Limitations, it hath always been, and ſtill is, continued to his Spiritual Seed; 'tis entered with them, and their Natural Seed immediately proceeding from their own Loins; yet not as tho they were coordinate Parents of the Faithful with *Abraham*, but as *Abraham*'s Seed have *Abraham*'s Bleſſing come upon them through Jeſus Chriſt.

I have only one more Paragraph in Mr. *Cox*'s Diſcourſe to reflect upon, and that is in his *pag.* 85. where he deduces this Corollary from what he ſaid concerning that Tranſaction of God with *Abraham*, recorded, *Gen.* 12.2,3. wherein he fancies the Covenant of Grace was entered with him.

Now tho having before proved, that no Covenant, and conſequently not the Covenant of Grace, was then entred with him, his Corollaries can be look'd upon but as meer Impertinencies; yet becauſe what I have elſewhere affirmed is concerned in what he there ſaith, I ſhall briefly reflect upon that Paragraph; And he thus expreſſes himſelf, *That the proper Heirs of this Bleſſing of* Abraham, *have a Right not only in ſome, but in all the Promiſes of the New-Covenant; and that not in a limited Senſe, and as ſuſpended on uncertain Conditions, but in a full Senſe*, &c. Now to this I ſhall only ſay, that as the Inference is impertinent, ſo the things inferred ſeem to be very unſound, and of a dangerous Conſequence to the Souls of Men. I ſay they ſeem to be ſo, becauſe I know not how he will interpret thoſe two Expreſſions; A Right in all the Promiſes

miſes of the New Covenant, and ſuſpended on uncertain Conditions. And therefore ſhall only deſire Mr. *Cox* to review, and ſeriouſly conſider, whether what he here ſays be conſiſtent with Truth, or with what himſelf hath elſewhere affirmed, in particular, in his 5*th*; ſo 142, 143, 144 Pages; and ſhall go on. And Mr. *C.* having added ſomewhat in Confirmation of this Inference, he adds the Limitation therefore of a New Covenant-Intereſt, to the Grant of an external and temporary Priviledg, only I conceive it to be utterly inconſiſtent with the Promiſes of the Covenant it ſelf; citing, *Iſa.* 54. 13. and 29. 21. *Jer.* 31. 33, 34. *Ezek.* 36. 26, 27. with *Heb.* 8. In this Mr. *Cox* and I differ, not as to the thing it ſelf; tho I conceive ſuch a Limitation of a New-Covenant-Intereſt, as he ſpeaks of, is no way inconſiſtent with thoſe Promiſes.

But to come to that wherein I am peculiarly concerned; and thus he adds, *Neither will theſe Texts admit of another Notion of late inſiſted on, for the Commendaton of Pædo-Baptiſm.* Here I ſuppoſe Mr. *Cox* hath a direct reſpect unto me; and therefore it's neceſſary that I ſhould briefly take notice of what he hath ſaid. And this I would in paſſage remark how far Mr. *C.* will extend that Expreſſion [of late] I know not; but if he thinks this is a new Notion ſtarted by me, it argues him to be but little acquainted with this Controverſy. But for the Notion it ſelf, and that is, That the Infant-Seed of Believers have all of them a certain and definite Intereſt in the Covenant of Grace, by virtue of which, they are compleatly juſtified before God from the Guilt

of

of Original Sin, both *Origans & Originatum*; and yet not having their Natures renewed, they may after fall away. This Mr. *Cox* thinks inconſiſtent with thoſe Texts before mentioned; but whether it be ſo or no, I ſhall refer him, with all others, to what I have written once and again, to ſhew its conſiſtency with them. Only let it be obſerved, that I ſay not they are compleatly juſtified before God, only I ſay they are diſcharged or freed from the Guilt of Original Sin, and that as the neceſſary reſult of the change of their States. See *Infant-Baptiſm from Heaven*, p. 46. to 63. So again, *p.* 208. to 213. See alſo my *Eſſay*, *p.* 89, and ſo on. And having ſpoken ſo much to this already, I ſhall add no more at preſent.

2. Mr. *C.* thinks this Notion is inconſiſtent with the Analogy of Faith. So *pag.* 86. To which I would ſay, That Men wedded to an Opinion, are apt to conceit that inconſiſtent with the Analogy of Faith, which only oppoſes their own private Opinion, poſſibly by them ſtiled Faith; and ſo is only inconſiſtent with the Analogy of their Faith. Sure Mr. *C.* cannot but know that many great Divines, who ſufficiently underſtood the Faith of the Goſpel, judg this Notion is no way inconſiſtent with that Faith. But,

2. I would rather ſay, The great Queſtion is, Whether the Covenant of Grace do indeed extend to, and include the Infants of believing Parents: And that it doth, as I conceive, I may ſay is fully and (as to all unbyaſſed and unprejudiced Perſons) ſatisfactorily proved: That that Covenant, *Gen.* 17. is the Covenant of Grace, I judg, is, if not before, yet now convincingly demonſtrated. Now

Mr.

Mr. *C.* grants that *Iſaac* was included in this Covenant; and I ſuppoſe he will grant he was ſo, meerly of *Abraham*'s natural Seed.

Hence it will undeniably follow, that the natural Seed of Believers, and that as ſuch, may have, and have had an Intereſt in the Covenant of Grace; and then ſome Good muſt be aſſigned them, by virtue of that their Intereſt therein.

Hence I would deſire one of theſe two Things of Mr. *C.*

1. That in caſe he perſiſt in his Opinion, and denies this to be the Covenant of Grace, and thereupon denies Infants to have any Intereſt in that Covenant, that then in caſe he ſend forth another Impreſſion of his Book, or think meet to engage any further in this Controverſy, he will not fail to give us a clear and ingenuous account of his Judgment, relating to the future State of Infants dying in their Infancy, eſpecially the Infants of Believers; and in caſe he judg any of them to find Mercy at the Hands of God, how they come ſo to do.

2. That in caſe he acknowledgeth this Covenant to be the Covenant of Grace, that then he will give us his Thoughts about the Good and Benefit that the Infant Seed of Believers have by their Covenant-Intereſt; as in caſe this be the Covenant of Grace, a Covenant-Intereſt ſome ſuch muſt neceſſarily have.

And this I ſhall ſay, if he can aſſign them any conſiderable Benefit in a way more conſiſtent with the Analogy of Faith than I have done; I am not ſo fond of this Notion, but I can relinquiſh it: if he

he cannot, then his *utere mecum*. But let us briefly ſee, what he hath ſaid to prove the inconſiſtency of this Notion with the Analogy of Faith. And thus he proceeds: having ſuppoſed that it muſt be granted, as it readily ſhall, *That either the ſtain of Original Sin in theſe Infants is purged when their Guilt is pardoned, or it is not.* The former he knows I affirm not, and therefore he proceeds to the latter, and ſaith, *If he ſaith their Guilt is pardoned, but their Natures not renewed, nor the power of Original Concupiſcence deſtroyed, ſo as Sin ſhall not have Dominion over them?* To which I anſwer, Mr. *C.* knows well enough what I have ſaid. I ſay, they are diſcharged from the Guilt and condemning Power of Original Sin, but have not their Natures at preſent renewed. But then, ſaith he, it will be replyed, *That then notwithſtanding their ſuppoſed Pardon, they remain an unclean Thing, and ſo uncapable of Admiſſion into the Kingdom of Glory:* Which is readily granted. And I ſuppoſe, Mr. *C.* will not deny, but that Believers have ſo much of Original Corruption inherent in them, as to render them, as ſo depraved and corrupted, uncapable of Admiſſion into the Kingdom of Glory. And why may not God purge Infants from the whole Maſs of Original Pollution at their very reception into Glory, as well as purge Believers of the remainders of that Pollution in them at theirs? But he proceeds: *But the Truth is, none are at any time juſtified before God, but ſuch as Chriſt hath loved and waſh'd from their Sins in his own Blood, and none are waſhed by him, but thoſe that are in him as the ſecond* Adam: Which is again granted. But then, ſaith he, *None can have Union with him but by the indwel-*

indwelling of his Spirit. This I deny, and deſire to ſee it proved. There is a Political, as well as a Phyſical Union with Chriſt. The former is made by the Covenant: The latter by the indwelling of the Spirit. See my *Eſſay*, *pag.* 65, 66. Till what is there ſaid be ſubſtantially confuted, and the contrary proved, *viz.* *That none have any Union with Chriſt, but thoſe who have the Spirit dwelling in them:* I ſhall conclude, that the Benefits afore mentioned are aſſignable to the Infant-Seed of Believers, in a full conſiſtency with the Analogy of the Faith of the Goſpel. As to what Mr. *Cox* adds, I ſhall deſire that he will explain, what he meaneth by the Spirit of God's applying the Blood of Chriſt for the remiſſion of Sin, and prove what he there affirms, and I hope he will find me no way tenacious of Deceit. But having diſpatched what I mainly intended, and Mr. *C.* proceeding in his two laſt Chapters upon a Suppoſition, that the Covenant under debate is the old Covenant, and that it did run in the extent pleaded for by him, the groundleſneſs of both which Suppoſitions being very apparent, they need no further Conſideration.

FINIS.

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